The Australian
WOMEN'S WEEKLY

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Barbara Jefford in "As You Like It." Stratford Tour, pages 16-17.

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The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

FEBRUARY 18, 1953 — Vol. 20, No. 38

DEATH FROM SCURVY

ONE of the most startling news items in a long while was an announcement by the superintendent of the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Sydney.

This was that a baby had died from scurvy.

The baby was dead on arrival at the hospital. Three other infants were admitted suffering severely from the disease.

The death of a child is always a private grief. But this fatality must cause public dismay.

In these days of baby health centres and pre-natal and post-natal care, scurvy is regarded by most people as an archaic disease.

It has an association with the British Navy under sail in the 19th century — Bligh and all that.

Most people attribute the dozen or so mild cases that occur in various districts each year to young mothers' ignorance of the fact that orange juice is the best scurvy preventive.

But ignorance has not been blamed this time. The outbreak has been linked with the high price of fruit.

While growers, agents, and retailers are wasting time blaming each other — and occasionally the transport system—for the high prices, those prices are still rising.

Added to them now is the high cost of this child's life — and perhaps others.

Our cover:

● On the cover is Shakespearian actress Barbara Jefford in the comedy role of Rosalind. In contrast you see her on pages 16 and 17 in the tragic part of Desdemona in "Othello." The pictures show the Stratford-Upon-Avon Company, of which Miss Jefford is a leading member, in Anthony Quayle's new production of the tragedy.

This week:

● There is sound commonsense in Kay Melaun's summing-up on the good-night kiss in the Youth Feature on Page 12, and her remarks are shot through with wisdom and humor. She discusses problems that face every girl, problems that most girls don't discuss with mother.

Next week:

● A foretaste of the rich color and ceremonial of the Coronation is given in pictures of the officers of the College of Arms who will have important roles on the great day.

The Earl Marshal of England, the Duke of Norfolk, England's premier duke, is head of the college. Officers are shown in their splendid gold-embroidered regalia.

Their heraldic titles, such as the four Pursuivants, Rouge Croix, Bluemantle, Portcullis, and Rouge Dragon, are derived from their duties of medieval days.

● If you make your own dresses you will be interested in the eight smart autumn styles for which patterns are available, which will be shown in our next week's issue.

Patterns were cut from our selection of pictures from overseas collections. They are so attractive that even novices at dressmaking will want to try their hands.

Two of the prettiest are the party frocks on the cover.

Story of Italian frogmen's war on shipping

Book review by HELEN FRIZELL

IN his book "Sea Devils," J. Valerio Borghese tells of the underwater campaign conducted by Italians of the Tenth Light Flotilla against units of the Royal Navy based at Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria during World War II.

The flotilla's attacks by midget submarines and underwater swimming cost the Allies 265,352 tons of shipping.

As a British Naval Intelligence officer wrote: "The operations demanded of the attackers physical daring and endurance which would have won respect in any navy of the world."

Most daring exploit was the Italians' attack on Alexandria Harbor in 1941, when mines put the battleships Queen Elizabeth and Valiant out of action.

To do this, volunteers of the Italian Tenth Flotilla wore rubber suits, rubber flippers, and breathing sets allowing 30 minutes' submersion.

Faces were painted black and their "heads covered with a small net in which seaweed, tow, or loose straw was entwined."

Mounted on "human torpedoes," they negotiated searchlights, depth-charging, and anti-submarine nets, then submerged to affix the charges.

The author also reveals the activity of Italians from their headquarters in a half-sunken steamer, Olterra, scuttled at the beginning of war at La Linea, just near Gibraltar.

Disguised as a new merchant crew, Italians went aboard under the noses of Spanish sentries and proceeded to "careen" the ship (turn it on one side for cleaning).

With equipment brought aboard, they cut a huge hole in the ship's side by oxygen flame under cover of an awning.

"By the evening," writes Borghese, "the work was over and the hole had disappeared under water. In this way a direct connection had been made between the flooded compartment of the hold and the open sea through which the 'pigs' (torpedoes on which two men could sit and be transported underwater) could enter or leave the vessel wholly unobserved."

When the attack was finally made, however, most of the Italians perished. Unknown to them, the British had a formidable secret weapon of their own—radar.

But to the end Olterra was not suspect.

News of Italy's defeat, of which Borghese was not informed, finished the work of the "sea devils." Some later worked for the Allies, but Borghese himself grew embittered, seeing his nation and his career broken.

He had been planning his campaign against the Royal Navy since 1935. He still considers that his chance may come again.

"It is not for polemical (controversial) reasons that the errors committed and the opportunities lost are here recalled," he writes. "It is because I consider that history ought to be impartially written for future generations; from the knowledge of their predecessors' mistakes they should learn not to commit them again."

J. Valerio Borghese could hardly be anything but partial to his own cause. He seems also incapable or realising that the greatest mistake of all was Italy's entry into the war on the side of Nazism.

"Sea Devils," by J. Valerio Borghese, is published by Andrew Melrose, Stratford Place, London. Our copy from the Grahame Book Company, Sydney.

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Women are dumb

BY CHARLES SAINT

It was easy to see that she was beautiful but it wasn't so easy to decide if she was clever or not

"LISTEN to this," said Michael. He slumped down into his chair and read from the letter: ". . . and I would point out that my little girl has teeth of such exquisite whiteness that they defy mere description; also, as she has never previously visited the city, she is fresh, vibrant, and unspoiled, and has none of that brittleness and sophistication which I feel is inherent in city girls . . ."

George shuffled together a bunch of photographs and whistled.

Michael continued: "'Furthermore, my little girl . . .'"

"Not so much of the verbiage," said George. "Let's have a look at her photograph."

"There isn't a photograph enclosed," said Michael.

"Doesn't comply with the conditions," said George. "Disqualify her."

Michael slumped further into his chair. "She might be just what we want," he said.

George blew a smoke ring. "Might is right," he said. "Sounds like a litle prig in pigtails. She's too young."

Michael shook his head. "Maybe it would be better if this Purliteeth competition could be won by some little girl——"

George shook the photographs. "What about this gorgeous feminine pulchritude?" he said.

Michael grinned. "Nine-tenths of it," he said, "is either bleached or hennaed, and its smiles are like something fixed on by a mechanic in need of a holiday."

"Purliteeth Toothpaste," said George patiently, "offered a prize for the most charming smile (female), which would be used in their advertisements, and I don't think that they will consider that they have got their money's worth if we, as advertising agents, produce a teenager with a book of geometry in one hand and a penny apple on a stick in the other."

Michael said, "What we want is something new. Freshness, simplicity, charm."

George sighed and gazed long and fondly at the photograph of a beautiful blonde. "Maybe I am not fastidious enough," he said.

"Now, listen," said Michael, "you go down to this place and take a look at this little girl to make sure that a parent's fond eye is not exaggerating her claim to beauty."

"Flattered," said George.

"And while you are there," said Michael, "you had better take a look at some of those other potential finalists from the same town to see whether they are worth while bringing down here."

George nodded.

Michael looked at him. "And try," he said, "to choose somebody who doesn't look like the figurehead on a Viking battleship."

George waved his hand airily. "Sure, sure," he said, "I know—you want somebody clever and beautiful."

Michael smiled sourly. "Listen," he said, "women, when they are beautiful, are so dumb that they think that two plus two equals the Einstein theory of relativity, and when they are clever they look like something over which the buzzards are hovering expectantly. You just get somebody beautiful; the dumber the better."

Less than a week later Michael received a wire from George. It contained one word: "Mm-mmm!"

Three days after that he came into Michael's office, selected the easiest chair, and looked as smug as a cat who had cornered the black-market in cream.

"Pal," he said, "how right you were about that little girl. Such naturalness; such vibrancy; such charm—such teeth—even her name is perfect."

"Well, let's start at the end and

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With his arm around Shannon, George escorted her across to Michael's desk. "This is my little girl," he said.

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The Grand Sophy

By GEORGETTE HEYER

SOPHIA STANTON-LACY, nicknamed "The Grand Sophy" by her friends, is blithely disrupting the home of her aunt, LADY OMBERSLEY, to whose care her father has entrusted her during his absence in Brazil.

She delights or shocks the various members of the household and their friends by her unconventional behaviour. She allies herself with her lovely cousin CECILIA, who, to the family's dismay, has rejected the eligible LORD CHARLBURY in favor of the feckless poet AUGUSTUS FAWNHOPE. She clashes constantly with CHARLES RIVENHALL, eldest son of the house, and his staid fiancee, EUGENIA WRAXTON.

Eugenia's disapproval reaches its height when Sophy, in a fit of mischief, involves her in a reckless and unbecoming drive about the streets of London. Sophy later apologises, but Eugenia is not mollified. NOW READ ON:

MISS WRAXTON and Sophy did not meet again until the day appointed by Lady Ombersley for going to call on her future sister-in-law at Merton. Miss Wraxton, in the meantime, convinced that she had become notorious, decided to pay a long-deferred visit to her elder sister, who lived in Kent.

The Rivenhalls thus enjoyed immunity from her punitive descents upon them for seven whole days, which was felt by almost all to be an advantage far outweighing the ills of Sophy's indiscretion. This did not reach the ears of Lady Ombersley, but was naturally known to the younger members of the household, some of whom were much shocked.

Others, notably Hubert and Selina, considered that their cousin had taken a splendid lark.

No apparent repercussions followed her exploit, and, although she was obliged to endure much chaffing from her young relatives, even this very soon took a turn in another direction. A much more fruitful topic for jests presented itself in the shape of young Lord Bromford, who swam suddely into the Rivenhalls' ken and was regarded by them as so much manna dropped from heaven.

Lord Bromford, who was almost unknown to the Polite World, had but lately, upon the death of his father, succeeded to a modest barony. He was the only surviving child of his parents, every one of his brothers and sisters (varying in number, according to popular report, from seven to seventeen) having died in infancy.

It may have been for this reason that his mother had from the start deemed him unfit to be wrested from her care. He had been educated at home, and, although there had been a project afoot to send him up to Oxford, a providential chill had intervened to save him from the perils of University life.

He was sent instead to Jamaica, on a visit to his uncle, the Governor.

When he returned to England, a few months before attaining his majority, he was so stout that his Mama was able to congratulate herself on the success of her scheme. She did not immediately perceive that his eighteen-month sojourn apart from her had had the effect of making him occasionally disinclined to submit to her benevolent rule.

On her advice, he wound mufflers around his neck and swathed his legs in rugs; but when she advised him not to subject his person to the racket of London, he said, after due consideration, that he rather thought he should like to live in London; and when she proposed a very eligible match for him, he said he was much obliged to her, but had not yet made up his mind what sort of a female he wished to marry.

His mother began to tell her friends that Henry could be led but not driven; his valet, a plain-spoken man, said that his lordship was as obstinate as a pig.

He had been upon the town for some time before the Rivenhalls were more than vaguely aware of his existence. It was after he met Sophy at Almack's and stood up with her in a country dance that the full glory of his personality burst upon them. For Lord Bromford, impervious alike to Cecilia's beauty and to the eligibility of his Mama's choice, had made up his mind that Sophy would make him a suitable wife.

He called in Berkeley Square, and as soon as Sophy entered the room it was obvious to the Rivenhalls why they had been so inflicted. Sophy's beau became in a trice the solid foundation upon which a lively set of young persons built the most preposterous of fabrications.

No street-singer could lift his voice in the Square but what Hubert or Cecilia would declare it to be Lord Bromford serenading Sophy; when he was confined to his house for three days with an internal disorder he was held to have fought a duel for the sake of her fine eyes.

Indeed, the story of his adventures in the West Indies, conceived, added-to, and improved upon by three fertile brains, grew so outrageous as to draw protests from Lady Ombersley and Miss Adderbury.

But Lady Ombersley, though she might deprecate such an excess of high spirits, could not help but be amused by the determination shown by Lord Bromford in his pursuit of her niece.

LORD BROMFORD was forever calling in Berkeley Square on the most slender of pretexts. He was impervious to snubs, and when his Mama hinted to him that Sophy would scarcely make a suitable wife for a serious man, being wholly given over to frivolity, he said that he was confident that he would be able to direct her thoughts into more sober channels.

The cream of the jest, thought the young Rivenhalls, was that Charles, in general so impatient of pretension, was, for inscrutable reasons, encouraging his lordship. Charles said that there was a great deal of good in Lord Bromford. He said that Lord Bromford's conversation showed him to be a sensible man, and that his descriptions of Jamaica were extremely interesting.

Only Selina (who was growing up, Charles said, to be disagreeably pert) ventured to observe that Lord Bromford's entrance into the house seemed to be the signal for Charles' departure for his club.

What with his lordship's courtship, the plans for the ball, the stream of visitors to the house, life in Berkeley Square had become all at once full of fun and excitement. Even Lord Ombersley was aware of it.

"I don't know what's come over you all, for the place was used to be as lively as a tomb!" he declared. "I'll tell you what, Lady Ombersley: I daresay I can prevail upon York to look in on your party."

"Prevail upon the Duke of York to come to my party?" echoed Lady Ombersley, in the greatest astonishment. "My dear Ombersley, you must be out of your senses! Ten, or perhaps twelve couples, getting up a dance in the drawing-room, and a couple of card-tables set out in the Crimson Saloon! I beg you will do no such thing!"

"Ten or twelve couples? No, no, Dussett would not be talking of red carpets and awnings for such a paltry affair as that!" said his lordship.

These ominous words struck a chill into his wife's soul. Beyond fixing the date for the party, and warning Cecilia not to forget to send a card to a very dull girl, who was her goddaughter, and must be invited, she had not as yet thought much about the engagement.

She now nerved herself to ask how many people were expected on the fatal night.

The answer almost brought on one of her spasms. She sat sniffing her vinaigrette, and moaning that she shuddered to think what Charles would say. It took Sophy twenty minutes to convince her that since he was not to be asked to defray the expenses of the entertainment, it was not his concern.

Even then Lady Ombersley dreaded the inevitable moment of discovery, and could scarcely see him walk into the room without giving a nervous start.

Fortunately for the success of the expedition, the truth had not dawned upon Charles when the Ombersley party set out to visit the Marquesa de Villacanas at Merton. The omens seemed to be propitious: the Marquesa had written a very pretty letter to Lady Ombersley, expressing her pleasure in the proposed meeting, and begging her to bring with her as many of her interesting children as would care to come.

The sun shone, and the day was warm, with no threat of April showers; and Miss Wraxton, who had returned to the metropolis in time to share in the treat, was in her most amiable humor, not even excluding Sophy from her good graces.

At the last moment, Hubert suddenly announced his intention of accompanying the party, saying that he too wanted to see the giraffe. Sophy frowned him down, and as his mother had not caught what he said, but at once began to express her delight in having his company, the awkward moment passed unnoticed.

Mr. Rivenhall, having greeted Sir Vincent Talgarth with perfect civility, was standing exchanging conversation with him while the three ladies who were to drive in the landaulet arranged themselves in it, Miss Wraxton begging to be allowed to take the back seat, and Cecilia insisting that she should not.

Everything seemed to be in train for a day of enjoyment, when Mr. Fawnhope came round the corner of the Square, saw the cavalcade, and at once crossed the road towards it.

Mr. Rivenhall's face hardened; he shot an accusing look at Sophy, but she shook her head. Mr. Fawnhope, shaking hands with Lady Ombersley, asked whither she was bound. She told him, Merton, and he said elliptically: "Statutes. Nolumus leges Angliae mutari."

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Part four of our romantic eight-part serial

"Very likely," said Lady Ombersley almost tartly.

Miss Wraxton, who could never resist the temptation to display her superior education, smiled quite kindly at Mr. Fawnhope, and said: "Very true. King John, you know, is said to have slept at the Priory the night before he signed the Great Charter. It is a very historic spot."

"Nelson!" said Mr. Fawnhope. "Romantic Merton! I will go with you." He then climbed into the carriage, and took his place beside Cecilia, smiling seraphically at Lady Ombersley.

"You cannot wish to go to Merton!" said Lady Ombersley, very much put-out, and hoping that Charles would not put her to the blush by saying something cutting to this tiresome young man.

"Yes," said Mr. Fawnhope. "There will be verdure, and that, I think, is what my soul craves. I, with my fair Cecilia, to Merton now will go, Where softly flows the Wandle, and daffodils that blow—What an ugly word is Wandle! How displeasing to the ear! Why do you frown at me? May I not go with you?"

This sudden change from rapt poet into cajoling boy threw Lady Ombersley off her balance, and she replied in a mollified voice: "I am sure we should be pleased to take you, Augustus, but we are going to visit the Marquesa de Villacanas, and she will not be expecting you."

"Now there," said Mr. Fawnhope, "is a beautiful name! Villacanas! It is most rich! A Spanish lady, with garments gay and rich as maybe, Decked with jewels had she on!"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Lady Ombersley crossly.

Sophy, much amused by Mr. Fawnhope's utter imperviousness to hints that he was not wanted, said laughingly: "Yes, pearls worth a king's ransom. She even loves an English man: my father!"

"How splendid!" said Mr. Fawnhope. "I am so glad I came!"

"Who is this Adonis?" Sir Vincent asked Mr. Rivenhall. "He and your sister, seated side by side, quite take one's breath away!"

"Augustus Fawnhope," replied Mr. Rivenhall curtly. "Cousin, if you are ready, I will hand you up!"

Lady Ombersley, gathering that she had received a tacit consent to Mr. Fawnhope's presence, told her coachman to start, Sir Vincent and Hubert fell in behind the carriage, and Mr. Rivenhall said to Sophy: "If this is your doing—!"

"I promise you it is not. If I thought that he had the smallest notion of your hostility, I should say that he had rolled you up, Charles: horse, foot, and guns!"

He was obliged to laugh. "I doubt if he would have the smallest notion of anything less violent than a blow from a cudgel. How you can tolerate the fellow—!"

"I said you that I was not at all one in my ideas. Come, don't let us talk of him! I have sworn not to quarrel with you to-day."

"You amaze me! Why?"

"Don't be such an ape!" she begged. "I want to drive your greys, of course!"

He took his place beside her in the curricle, and nodded to the groom to stand away from the greys' heads. "Oh, that! When we are clear of the town, you shall do so."

"That," said Sophy, "is a remark calculated, I daresay, to make me lose my temper at the outset. I shall not do it, however."

Blissfully ignoring his enraged companion, Augustus sat on a bank, absorbed in metrical composition.

"I don't doubt your skill," he said.

"A handsome admission. It cost you an effort to make it, perhaps, and that makes it the more valuable. But the roads are so good in England that not much skill is required. You should see some of the tracks in Spain!"

"Deliberate provocation, Sophy!" said Mr. Rivenhall.

Once beyond the narrow streets he let his horses lengthen their stride, and overtook, and passed, the landaulet. Miss Wraxton was seen to be conversing amicably with Mr. Fawnhope, while Cecilia was looking bored. The reason was explained by Hubert, who rode beside the curricle for a little way, and disclosed that the subject under discussion was Dante's Inferno.

"And this I will say for Fawnhope!" he added handsomely, "he knows that Italian stuff much better than your Eugenia, Charles, and can go on at it for hours, never at a loss! Cecilia don't like it above half. Jupiter, I should laugh if Eugenia were to cut her out with the poet!"

Receiving no encouragement from his brother to expatiate on this theme, he fell behind again to rejoin Sir Vincent. Mr. Rivenhall handed over the reins to Sophy, and the remainder of the drive passed very pleasantly, no controversial topics arising to mar the good relations between them.

The house procured for the Marquesa by Sir Horace was a spacious Palladian villa, prettily situated in charming gardens, and with a bluebell wood attached, which, though fenced off from the pleasure grounds, could be reached through graceful iron gates.

A few shallow steps led up from the carriage-sweep to the front door, and this, upon the approach of the curricle, was flung open, and a thin man, dressed in black, came out of the house, and stood bowing on the top step.

Sophy greeted him in her usual friendly fashion, and at once asked where Mr. Rivenhall could stable his horses. The thin man snapped an imperative finger and thumb, rather in the manner of a conjurer, and a groom seemed to spring up out of nowhere, and ran to the greys' heads.

"I'll see them stabled, Sophy, and come in presently with my mother," Mr. Rivenhall said.

Sophy nodded, and walked up the steps, saying: "There are two more in the party than you were expecting, Gaston. You won't mind that, I daresay."

"It makes nothing, mademoiselle," he replied grandly. "Madame awaits you in the salon."

The Marquesa was discovered reclining upon a sofa in a drawing-room facing the south lawn. She was an opulent brunette, dressed more in the French style than the English.

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The day is sure to come when a man must be...

His Own Boss

A short story complete on this page. By **SEYMOUR SHUBIN**

"YOU could have told him something," she said irritably.

"Look, what more could I tell him?" he demanded. "I said we were going out and he said he wouldn't stay more than fifteen minutes. He'll be gone before you know it. He's only here between trains."

"You know how Mother and Father hate to be late." Laura was upset.

"We'll pick them up in plenty of time," he said calmly, although he was just as aggravated as she. He knew the old man's temper and, despite himself, he feared it.

"When Tony sees we're all dressed he won't stay more than a mintue."

This comforted her and she started to tie his bow-tie.

"What did you say his name was?" she asked.

"Tony. Tony Evans." He smiled weakly. "You'll like him."

"Well, he really isn't a friend of yours. I mean not now. It was years ago—"

How many years was it? No more than seven, although it seemed like a century ago that they'd said good-bye. Tony promising him he'd visit him and Paul swearing it wouldn't be more than a couple of months at the most before he was visiting him.

Before that there had been Tel Aviv, Tobruk, and then home again, and then New Guinea.

Both of them together. Always. Sharing everything, not only danger but even the most intimate thoughts.

Funny, wasn't it, how you drifted apart; for after their last meeting there had been a few letters and then, somehow, nothing.

"He's going to be as uncomfortable as you are," Laura said. "After all, what can you two have in common any more?"

That was the truth. The war had brought them together like drifters meeting on a park seat who talk for a while and then move on in different directions.

It was just that and little more, even though at the time they had shared almost every possible human experience and emotion. Why did some people insist on going back into the past, hoping to recapture something that was no more?

Tony on the telephone, for instance, with his "How are you going, Bluey?" Just as if there had been no change, just as if time and circumstance had altered nothing. Bluey had been Tony's name for him in the army and, until a few minutes ago, Paul had never heard it again.

Ten minutes later the bell rang and Marie came to the bedroom door, rapped softly, and announced: "A Mr. Evans."

"You'll see," Paul said to Laura, smiling, "it won't take long."

Tony was standing in the living-room, running the brim of his hat through his hands and looking around as if in wonder at the ornateness of the place.

The moment he saw Paul his face broke into a grin.

"Bluey, you old son of a gun!" He grasped Paul's hand with both of his. "Bluey, Bluey! Gosh, it's good to see you!"

"Same here, Tony." And it was, too. All at once. "How're things going?"

"No kicks at all, boy. Gee, let me look at you." He stepped back shaking his head admiringly. "Gettin' fat there, pal."

"What a thought!" Paul laughed. "Tony, I want you to meet my wife."

Tony took the hand which Laura, smiling politely, offered.

"Let me tell you something," he said to her. "You've got the pride of the Ninth Divvy. That's the truth."

He turned back to Paul, grinning. "Aaah," he said happily and jabbed Paul lightly on the arm. "I wouldn't have missed this for the world."

He whistled softly. "Look at the get-up! I'd never believe it." He looked at Laura. "The untidiest coot in the whole Division."

Paul felt his face grow warm. For a moment he had been back in camp with Tony, but suddenly he remembered.

"I'm going to leave you two boys alone," Laura said. "You must have a lot to talk about." She smiled.

"I hate to remind you, Paul, but we'll have to be leaving soon." To Tony: "Can't you possibly stay in town over night?"

"I wish I could," Tony answered, "but my train'll be going soon. I'm off to Melbourne, you know. My brother's there. Haven't seen him in years. Got the little woman working for me while I'm away. That's the life, eh, Bluey?" and he winked.

Paul's face grew warmer. He smiled uncomfortably.

The moment Laura left the room, Tony said softly, "Not bad, Bluey."

Paul knew what he meant. Rich wife. In the chips. Easy Street. All the things both of them used to joke about in the foxholes.

"She's a wonderful girl," Paul said. He didn't know why he had to feel apologetic.

"If I know you, she has to be," Tony added, almost to himself. "Some blokes marry a rich girl, and they're sunk. It happened to a chap I know. They gave him a job with a fancy little title, and he takes orders from everyone, including his brother-in-law. Scared to think for himself. He's got a nice wife, but she's so used to pushing him around she doesn't know any better. And he's too scared to stand up and push back. Perhaps he likes it that way; I don't know. But you're different to him. Don't I know?" He grinned. "Don't I remember what you always used to say?"

Paul took a cigarette from a tray and lighted it. He wanted to ask Tony what he always used to say, because it was so long ago and he couldn't remember. And it would seem silly to ask.

"There wasn't anyone who was going to give you orders again," Tony said reflectively.

"There wasn't anyone going to tell you what to do or how to do it. You were going to be your own boss back home, even if it meant being a beachcomber. I never forget that, Bluey."

It was coming back now, like a childhood thought long forgotten. That had been when living itself had been the only important thing, when the sheer process of just staying alive had been all that counted and everything else had grown dim and inconsequential—money, pride, position. Everything.

Seeing a bunch of your pals die or burying your head in your arms and praying that the next one hit far away did that to you.

You'd think at the time that you'd never forget; but it grew easy, later.

"My old man could have got me a job at the factory when I got out of the army," Tony went on. "But I kept remembering what you said.

"Funny how I never could forget it.

"I had a few quid saved up so I bought myself—no, don't laugh," he said, just faintly uncomfortable, looking around at the elegantly furnished room, "a sort of snack-bar—hamburgers, sandwiches, meat-pies.

"But I did well. Got enough dough out of it to put down a deposit on a real restaurant. Not big, you know, but good class.

"And I'm making a nice, comfortable living. Of course, the best thing is that I married the right sort of girl, she understands me and what I want and we work together. But I'm the sergeant for a change."

Paul sucked in deeply on his cigarette, his heart pounding. He'd spoiled Laura himself. He hadn't married her just for her money, but he'd let the money enslave him.

Laura opened the door just then and peered in, smiling. She didn't say anything, but her smile implied that they had to leave.

Paul turned to Tony. "What time is your train, Kiddo?" That had been his name for Tony.

"It leaves in about two hours." Tony stood up. "But I'll be going."

"Laura," Paul said firmly, "telephone your father and mother and tell them we won't be there."

"What?" She stared at him unbelievingly. "Wh-why?"

"Because we've got a guest," he said simply. "And he's staying for dinner."

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Laura didn't say anything, but her smile clearly implied that the time had come for them to leave.

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The Pit in the

HEAVY BAILEAUX stood at the rail of the little gunboat and looked at the seascape you could never quite believe.

From crimson water the flippers of soup turtles rose and sank lazily as from the palm-thick shores and eucalyptus-jungled hills of the island the white birds took off for the wine-and-purple mountains of the mainland.

It was as unreal as if the birds were embroidered on a purple-and-crimson scarf stitched in jungle-green and gold.

It gave him a catch inside. Especially the birds that were like sparks of snow-and-white flowers, and yet somehow like wicked and merry gnomes, bead-eyed, expressive—crested, companionable yet unknowable; so beautiful that his big, blunt fingers hungered to touch the shining feathers.

He wanted a bird for a pet; wanted it so much that his broken-nosed face and all his large, ex-pugilist's frame expressed his longing.

In imagination he saw the bird that he might have had if the Old Man had not objected to pets.

Sometimes it would be a gay, brightly colored parrot, or, like the imperial birds passing overhead, it would be a big white cockatoo, sulphur-crested, jolly-eyed, imperturbable yet winsome. After considerable thought he had named it Cocky.

He would teach it things. It would know him, so that it would

While Heavy held gently on to the fishing-rod the Old Man muttered, "Must say it's doing the best for us."

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Jungle

A strange adventure story

By DOROTHY COTTRELL

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK BECK

fluff the lovely crest and climb on the bars of its cage at his approach. Often it could come out of its cage and play about the messroom.

He'd see it didn't bother the other men. When he went ashore on leave, Cocky could ride on his shoulder, and people would exclaim at the bird's beauty.

And no one had better hurt Cocky. He, Heavy, wasn't good with words and he wasn't smart enough to play games, but he was just so big and so obviously an ex-prize fighter that no one would fool with Cocky while he was around.

Maybe sometimes, as Cocky rode on his shoulder, the fat and feathered cheek of the bird would lightly touch his own cheek, indicating comradeship and mutual enjoyment.

But that was just a dream. He couldn't have one. The Old Man wouldn't have "beastly birds" on board. Yet otherwise the Old Man was so decent that Heavy didn't want to change ship.

He was as proud of the ship and of its survey work as the Old Man himself was. The Old Man had commanded a ship of the line, but had asked for the survey assignment, because of the survey work they went into wonderful places where regular naval craft wouldn't go.

And the Old Man himself was a sort of defence to Heavy. Not that the other men disliked Heavy. Just that they knew he wasn't smart, except at his work, and they made him the ship's joke.

Like getting him to repeat things that tied him up; then laughing because he got more tied. Well, once the Old Man, who could move very quietly, had come on the baiting and he had said, "Baileaux! Go to the bridge and get my pipe."

The Old Man had rather prominent eyes, heavy pink jowls and a rather pouting expression, but his face could look fine in a hurricane. And as Heavy said, "Yes, sir!" and went, the Old Man had said things to the men in a voice that cut like a knife.

"You rotters!" the Old Man's low voice had said, as he thought Heavy couldn't hear. "Think yourselves funny, do you? You all cheered your silly heads off when he was champion, didn't you? When he was getting this way for your amusement? Well, he's still more of a man than the bunch of you.

"What do most of you do with your spare time anyway? Get drunk and pick up a girl and be a trouble to the service, that's what! Well, Heavy didn't. He looked after his mother and five young brothers. Put the boys through school, set them all up. Then he got married — to a sweet girl—and had a little nipper of his own."

The Old Man's voice stopped a minute. "Had a little cottage for them while he was away in the war. Well, when he got back, there was just a bare place where the cottage had been. The bombers had been there. No one ever found his wife or the kid. That made him—well, a bit more the way he is! And if any one on this ship ever notices the way he is again, he'll deal with me, that's what! Understand?"

Heavy hadn't even known the Old Man knew about Maggie or Billy or about how the crowd cheered when you were champ. Nothing was ever said about any of it between him and the Old Man, but Heavy belonged to the Old Man for life.

The only near approach to ever saying anything was once when Heavy was carrying the Old Man's fishing rods. The Old Man liked him when he went fishing because Heavy didn't talk unless he was talked to. Well, the Old Man was winding in the line one day at the end of some cliff fishing.

Out of nowhere, he looked at the sea and said, "Fishing's a good anaesthetic, you know, Baileux. Took it up after my fiancee was killed. Fine seat on a horse, she had. Did a lot of riding together when we were youngsters. She was killed in a fall a week before we were to be married. Twenty years ago."

So that was how the Old Man knew how Heavy felt about Maggie. Heavy did extra shining on the metal parts of the fishing gear after that.

There! There came the final flight of cockatoos from the island now. And the sunset was so strong that now their snow was stained with pink.

Behind him, the Old Man said of the clamoring birds, "Infernal, squawking things! . . . Get the tackle and the butterfly net in order, Baileaux! To-morrow we're going fishing and collecting 'flies."

Heavy had spun and saluted, with smiles all over his battered face. He said, "Yes, sir!"

"And get that grin off your face!" the Old Man said. This was part of their private comradeship. It was like an affectionate master playfully slapping a big dog.

The leeward side of the island was white beaches fringed with umbrella trees and with coconut palms, then more or less open forests of eucalyptus trees and giant paperbarks. The windward side was orchid-covered cliffs and the towering mat of the rain forest that had a bad reputation with captains because seamen were said to have used it to jump ship.

Even with the shelter of the Barrier Reef that lay eastward beyond the horizon, the surf was strong on the windward shore, and the Old Man sent the launch back to the ship from the last sheltered bay to the north.

Then Heavy and the Old Man worked their way along the rocks until they reached a place of grey cliffs and lumpy orchid roots, where they could cast into the green water beyond the surf.

The day sparkled but the fishing was poor. So, after the picnic lunch, the Old Man—who didn't like catching butterflies, but did it as a duty to the British Museum—got out the net and the cyanide jar, and they went after the huge emerald-green and black butterflies of the island.

The Old Man also wanted a special fern for his sister in England. And the best ferns were said to be on the central peak, which was usually approached from the leeward bay. But the Old Man said, "We should be able to get through from here."

So, with Heavy carrying the fishing rods, they worked their way up a small stream. And at first the grassy banks of the stream were open and trailed with maidenhair ferns.

Then the pink-fruited figs pressed closer and tree ferns made a roof of pale green fronds, and then the great tree trunks pressed in so that the stream was a winding aisle through a cathedral and there were only tiny patches of sky, high up between interlocking branches.

Big lianas coiled up the trees and looped thorny and living ropes across the stream bed, and the ferns here were almost ivory-colored, while in places the dead leaves were three feet thick. And the stream bottom was so slippery that the Old Man spent a good deal of time sitting down without meaning to.

The smell of clean mould came up as they trod on the leaves, and water pressed out of the leaves even where they were banked high. All the while they were climbing, and the Old Man puffed, but kept going gamely.

Then the stream began to run through a dark gorge, its rock walls not five feet apart and blotched with the creamy-pale ferns.

"Wonder if that stream comes out of the mountain?" the Old Man said.

Water ran down the cliffs on either side of them and the light was so slight that you had to look hard to see where you were stepping. Then, with a final squeeze where the water ran above their knees, the gorge widened into a basin.

Overhead was a roof of great branches, dead leaves and living leaves and small, pale roots of the things that had grown on the leaves. And the hairlike mats of the devil vine made wispy mattresses. Light came palely from the top of the cliff ahead, down which the stream fell as a waterfall.

"Spooky spot!" the Old Man said. "See any way up, Baileaux?"

Heavy said, "Looks as if we might get up where that little stream comes down to port, sir."

"Looks is if you might, you mean!" the Old Man said.

Heavy said, "Shall I try it, sir?"

The first twenty feet was easy, then he really had to climb, and at the top he struck a sort of cliff of dead leaves, perhaps five feet deep. When he tried to get up it, an avalanche of dead leaves and wet leaf mould fell over him and over the Old Man, who swore.

"Will I come down, sir?" Heavy said.

"Enough's come down already! Keep going!" the Old Man said.

By dint of burrowing, Heavy got hold of a big root and managed to shinny up it to the top of the leaves. Water squashed out of them as he sat on them.

Peering through the gloom, he could just see that between him and the continuation of the main stream was an entangled mass of lianas and fallen trees, but it looked as if they could work around this through the forest, that was different here because the tree branches began closer to the ground.

He reported, climbed down, and with the Old Man clawing and Heavy boosting him from behind, they both reached the top. The forest floor was like waves of the sea, for it rolled up around every tree and sank to troughs between the trees.

Beyond the lianas and the fallen trees, a ten-foot-high hurricane-wash of oozing earth continued to cut them off from the stream.

Heavy said, "I've heard tell from bird hunters there's sometimes false floors in these forests, sir. So a man can go through what seems good ground like."

The Old Man said, "Poppycock!"

They moved south beside the wash, through the leaden light that rayed level with the ground from the greater openness of the stream course.

Heavy kept trying the footing, but you couldn't tell, because everywhere was the same great, spongy cushion of foot-deep moss, velvety puffball fungus and wet leaves. And everywhere the same low and limby forest stretched away.

Overhead, more dead leaves and patches of ferns and fungus clotted the massed devil vine, which was sickly from lack of light. Then the light was getting stronger and above them was a break in the trees, like a leafy light shaft reaching up to the forest top, with leaves that showed green and a peephole of sky from around which the curious heads of white cockatoos looked down at them.

One snowy bird even clambered down a banyan aerial the better to see what they were doing, his crest opening and shutting like a strange, sulphur-hearted flower.

Suddenly there was a yell from the Old Man and the angle of the leaf floor under Heavy's feet altered sharply, so that he felt as if he were sliding down a wet haystack. Over his shoulder he had a glimpse of the Old Man's hand disappearing into a hold from which spores of powder fungus drifted up.

He heard muffled tearings and crackings in the leaves, a showering sound, a dull thump from below. Then the leaves under him gave way like a rotten thatch, and he, too, was falling in a choking shower of muddy leaf mould into darkness and rank dampness, where he landed as if on a not-too-springy feather bed. He had kept his grip on the fishing rods.

Water, dirt, and leaves continued to rain over him. About him were darkness and space.

He gasped, "Are you all right, sir?"

A yard away, the Old Man's voice said, "Certainly! Nothing more than a broken ankle! Always enjoy hundred-foot falls!"

Actually, Heavy guessed, looking up at the rift in the mass above them, they had probably fallen about twenty feet.

He choked, "Your ankle . . . is it broken . . . sir?" The Old Man's figure wasn't a good one for tumbling.

"Yes." The Old Man coughed. "How's the cyanide jar? Got the flashlight?"

The cyanide jar was all right, but the torch had fallen from its sling on his belt. "Better not move around too much, sir," Heavy muttered,

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Continuing . . . .

The Pit In The Jungle

from page 9

"they do say you can fall through the false floors in these rain forests."

"So I gathered," the Old Man said.

Heavy's groping hand found the torch. Its yellow beam jumped into the gloom and they saw the nature of the place into which they had fallen. To the west, towards the mountain, was sheer rock wall; to north and east were also rocks, but with an overhang towards the top. To the south, a dark fissure stretched away. Everywhere water dropped and glistened.

"Get around a hundred and thirty inches of rain a year," the Old Man had said.

Some twenty feet above them was the underside of the roof of rotted leaves and webbed roots. From this roof to the floor of more ancient leaf mould extended roots—stringy roots of trees, transparent pink roots of succulents, wiry roots of ferns, the remains of old liana ropes.

"Unpleasant-looking spot!" the Old Man said. "Better not waste the torch, Baileaux! May need it." He was taken with sneezing. "Got a pocket-knife?"

"It must have fell out, sir," Heavy said, groping. "I'll find it—"

"Keep still a minute! We've got to think."

"Yes, sir," Heavy said.

"How thick do you think that infernal thatch is?"

Heavy estimated carefully on his fingers. "Maybe three feet where we came through. Maybe ten feet near the walls. It's sort of rolled up there, sir."

"H-m-m-m. That's what I was afraid of," the Old Man said. "Suppose it does form like they say. Forest grows, and branches, lianas, and devil vine make a net. Leaves fall on the net, and the whole thing roots and grows again! This was probably a sink hole — that's why there's a gap in the forest above it. Give me the torch!" He shone the beam economically upward.

"Aren't any lianas or roots under the part we came through. That's going to put us up against ten feet of digging from below if we reach the blamed ceiling! But best chance of getting up is by the roots and lianas first. I don't think they'll carry you."

"We'll soon see, sir," Heavy said heartily.

The Old Man got to his hands and knees and swore as his ankle caught him. "And watch where you're falling. Could be two or three floors to these things. Little enough air here. I'll take a crawl round the place and keep looking for the knife."

Heavy moved carefully, treating himself to a last glance at the little patch of sky. Up there the wind was blowing and the cockatoos on the treetops saw the blue freedom of the Coral Sea and the bald grey crags of the island and the lilac mountains of Australia.

The springiness under his feet was uncomfortable and he'd a notion he could hear water running somewhere way down below, but nothing gave. He drew together some of the more promising roots and draped liana stems.

He put his foot into a place where the lianas crossed, but they broke as the roots tore free and he crashed in a scatter of thorns and trash.

"Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze," the Old Man said.

Heavy knew that this was meant to be a joke, and he laughed dutifully. But this was a mistake, for earwigs fell into his mouth. Above them the whole netted mass shook and rained its mud, leaf fragments, and life.

Nothing else would even begin to carry him. The dead lianas broke as soon as he put his weight on them. The roots were too frail to be of use.

"Isn't going to work, is it?" the Old Man asked.

"I'll keep trying, sir."

"Bulldog Breed," the Old Man said. "All that sort of thing. Isn't going to work! No way up the rocks either. A centipede couldn't get through the fissure . . . and not much chance it would be better off if it did! Sit down and let's think!"

Heavy sat down and the blood from the thorn cuts ran streakily down his arms and ankles.

He could see that the Old Man was in a lot of pain. He said cheeringly, "They'll be looking for us when we don't show at the beach, sir."

"Naturally," the Old Man said, and grinned. "They'll look along the windward shore first, then they'll look along the currents for floating bodies, on the assumption we've been drowned and that *I*, at least, will surface nicely." His smile was grim now.

"They'll climb the peak and look over the jungle with glasses for smoke signals. They'll send search parties to fire shots and listen for us calling for help. They won't see any signals and they won't hear any calls for help . . . and they won't find this hole, Baileaux. And we know it!"

Heavy chilled and yet glowed to the words. It was bad to be trapped. But it was good that the Old Man talked to him like this. He was, he knew, the only seaman on the ship the Old Man would have talked to like this.

He said, "Well, we'll just have to get out, sir."

The Old Man's voice had its inner laugh. "He didn't!"

"Pardon, sir?"

The Old Man flashed the torch into the fissure of the rock some twenty feet away and held it steady as Heavy felt his hair rise on his great neck. In the cleft of the rocks, leaning partly against them in a sort of gesture of last appeal, was the white-picked skeleton of a man.

"Found him a while ago," the Old Man said. Near the little bones of the skeleton's feet were queer, twisted lumps of something.

"You think he's an aboriginal, sir?" Heavy asked, steadying his voice to the proper tone of impersonal curiosity.

The Old Man shook his head. "One of the sailors who jumped ship on the island! That's what's left of his boots near his feet."

"Poor chap," Heavy whispered. "The poor chap." The light from the shaft in the forest was going, and he got to his feet. "I'd better get busy, sir! Got to get you to a doctor!"

The Old Man's voice was kind, "We'd better cross off what we can't do, Baileaux; then see what we can! Let's suppose a search party comes up the stream. It's unlikely, but they might. They'd keep firing shots. We might hear 'em, but would they hear us? Try a yell, Baileaux!"

Heavy yelled towards the small aperture in the ceiling. Fungus dust drifted down and extra water dripped, but it was as if he had yelled into a wet feather mattress. The masses of sound-proofing above them absorbed his voice.

"They wouldn't hear it, not above the stream," the Old Man said. "Starting about four hours from now—when they could be near here — we'll take turns yelling every ten minutes. They won't hear it except by a miracle, but we had better not overlook miracles."

Heavy nodded, and the Old Man went on, "If that last shipment of batteries had been any good we might have done something shining the torch on the treetops — though it wouldn't show far. Apart from that, we couldn't set fire to the infernal stuff up there, even if we could take the risk of being burned to death or smothered by smoke."

There was a little silence. Again the Old Man went on thoughtfully, "We could make a bundle of some of our clothes—though they're wet —tie the fish rods together and fire the clothes with lighter fluid and poke them up through the roof. The chance against anyone seeing it's about a million to one. But if ever we do hear a shot, we can try it.

"Or if we tried it in daylight with leaves on top for smoke, there's the chance that someone on the peak, looking at exactly the right bit of the island just as the smoke went up — if it ever did go up through the treetops — would see it.

"We can try tying two of the fish rods together with a hook on the end made out of the net frame. Then try to claw down the roof until we strike something that might carry us; then try to get a sinker on a line over that; then try to pull a rope made of the rest of the lines and our clothes over after it."

It took a long while because they couldn't find the knife. It didn't work because the hook was too blunt and weak and the rods too pliant.

"Got to do better than that!" the Old Man said.

The darkness was absolute now; black and choking.

"I'm not good at thinking, sir," Heavy said. "Except about birds. I do sort of know what birds will do." He checked himself, knowing it to be dangerous ground.

But the Old Man did not explode. Instead, he said, "Go and check how the loose stones are along the base of the cliff."

Under the leafmould drifts there were a good many stones. There was also the poor chap with the remains of his shoes by the surprisingly little bones of his feet.

Heavy reported, "Fair lot of stones, sir."

"Well, we may as well amuse ourselves," the Old Man said. "If we can stack enough stones against the sheer part of the rock and keep building them up, we may get something we can reach the roof from. Whether we can get through depends on how close that hurricane wash is. We don't want an earth slide on top of us. It's worth trying!"

The Old Man got on to his hands and knees and began to crawl towards the cliff base.

Heavy said, "Your ankle—"

But the Old Man kept on crawling and working the stones along until they were against the place where the rocks didn't overhang. From the hole in the roof the little draught of night air came down. They worked steadily for perhaps an hour, then rested while the Old Man smoked a cigarette and Heavy chewed a twig.

As they were having their pause for a cigarette and a twig at three in the morning there was a sudden little jet. They listened; it came again, more in the flesh than audible to the ear.

The Old Man said, "Those are shots!"

They yelled. The sound-proofing of the trap swallowed the sound of their voices.

"Light the clothes!" the Old Man said.

Heavy took the bundle of clothes carefully, knowing he must not hurry just because the clothes might mean hearing men's voices and seeing the lights of the ship and having coffee in the mess-room with a big plate of eggs, fried golden brown.

He made his hands be careful with the lighter fluid and careful so as not to damper the matches. Pushed up on the poles, the bundle flared blue, and he could even see, high up, the roof of the forest. But the moment the lighter fluid burned out, the clothes went out too. You could just smell burned alcohol.

"Poke the torch up!" the Old Man said.

The torch looked futilely small on the end of the poles. They listened, and shouted, and listened. Then twice again they heard the little shock of sound, once nearer, then farther away.

"Too bad!" the Old Man said. "They didn't see either of 'em! If the clothes had caught . . . but we'd better keep the rest of the fluid to try for smoke in the day." They went back to rolling stones.

At four in the morning, after they had their rest, the Old Man said, "We'd better take watches. You get some sleep."

Heavy hadn't known how tired he was until his head hit the leaf mould; then in spite of scratches and bites and the things that ran over him, he was asleep. When the Old Man woke him, he could see the opening in the trees again, far far above, and the paleness of the blue sky.

While the Old Man rested Heavy went on working at the pile of stones which was quite respectable now. The stones were getting scarcer. He had to crawl long distances to get them and dig deep in the mould. Also the leaf mould was pressing down under the weight of the pile.

At noon, the Old Man said, "We'll try smoke! They're sure to have a man on the peak by now."

Heavy refixed the bundle of clothes with leaves on top to make it smoke, and then used the last of the lighter fluid. The bundle burned rather better this time, and

To page 36

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ARLENE DAHL

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YOUTH FEATURE by Kay Melaun

The good-night kiss

The good-night kiss is the customary thing to-day. The routine hasn't changed in 30 years: Boy takes out girl, sees girl home, kisses her at front door.

- *Why be grateful?*
- *Don't seem too eager*
- *Beware the wolf*

OF course, there are different types of good-night kisses. Some are pecks. Others last so long that they're broken up only by the sound of father's threatening footsteps.

I don't know whether the good-night kiss is so customary that, as one young man said, girls always "expect it."

"It's only polite," he added. But this was an over-statement. Surely it's extravagant to describe all good-night kisses as mere courtesy gestures.

The average girl's attitude is that it makes her seem too eager if she kisses a boy good-night the first time he takes her out. But on second and subsequent dates she expects it.

Actually the stage has been reached where a young woman is puzzled if a man doesn't try to kiss her good-night.

She will either dismiss him as being too slow for words or, if he is such a catch that she can't possibly do this, she will get anxious about herself.

"What's wrong with me? Why doesn't he like me? Am I the girl in the advertisements? Do I offend?" This is how the self-examination runs.

As for the man who tries to high-pressure every girl at every date. "He's a wolf," the girls say.

Though they say it fearfully or disapprovingly, they'll always be intrigued by a wolf.

It's regrettable, but, alas, too true, that bad men fascinate nice girls. Only, watch your step with them. They're so much cleverer than you are.

Every female creature from the age of two and upwards wants to be noticed, appreciated, praised, petted, and menaced by men, usually in that order.

The conceited beauties take this treatment as their due and condescend to bestow their kisses if and when they please.

The average girl gets a normal amount of such treatment in her twenties. The memories of those gay days are usually quite enough to stop her yearning for further conquests when she's older.

But there are such a lot of girls who are over-grateful for attentions like good-night kisses.

They aren't necessarily plain. Some of them are pretty. But whatever the cause, they are self-conscious and unsure of themselves.

Their gratitude to the boy who has taken them out often blinds them as to why they were so eager about kissing him good-night.

"I wish you wouldn't hold me like a football!"

Don't think I'm talking about the too-easy Miss. She is a chapter in herself, and is in a different class from the girls so hungry for attentions that they would count it utter bliss if someone—no matter who—really fell head over heels in love with them.

Hope and longing make them believe that every date is an occasion, that every evening is the evening, that every good-night kiss is a big moment.

Most of the time the girls confuse their regret at having to put the night away with romance. They mistake their loneliness and longing to be understood for a special attachment to a particular boy.

They experience a normal biological reaction to a kiss, and argue from this, in a confused way, that this is the one man, that this is the one wonderful moment.

Do you remember the kiss of Heathcliff and Catherine as described in "Wuthering Heights"? "An instant they held asunder, and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought (she) would never be released alive."

That, assuredly, was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Magic, irresistible moments don't arrive as regularly as the milk — though they sometimes happen at the same hour. Contrary to what films and fiction imply, they're rare.

Then again, if you're too eager, too fervent, too prodigal with your romancing, you're liable to be misunderstood.

Only the very shy, very young man will think that the ardor of your good-night kisses is for him alone.

The average boy will conclude that you're "easy." He will anticipate further favors to come. After which, he will pass on to the next soft mouth.

If he has had his first year or two of taking girls out, he will have had some of the conceit knocked out of him. He will argue: "It was nothing special for me—that's how she goes on with every bloke."

Will he talk about you? If he's not a cad, he won't. He may not exactly swap experiences with his friends. There may be no details.

But men are masters of the bored, wise smile and the triumphant settling of the knot of the tie when a girl's name comes up.

Remember that tie knot next time you see it within an inch of your nose on your doorstep.

DISC DIGEST

WHEN Marge and Gower Champion were knee-high to a grasshopper, Joan Crawford introduced the song "Everything I Have Is Yours." Now the title becomes that of the Champions' first starring film, and five items from the sound-track are available on two discs. Marge sings "Derry Down Dilly" on MGM5130, and is joined by spouse Gower for the coupling, "Like Monday Follows Sunday." On MGM5131 there's the entertaining "Serenade For A New Baby" (orchestra, with no vocal), and the twin coupling is "17,000 Telephone Poles," plus the film title song, in both of which Monica Lewis is vocalist. But star of the set is the Studio Orchestra, conducted by Johnny Green, turning in smashing performances paced to suit the Champions' nimble terping.

★ ★ ★

NO pun intended, but I found the singing of Decca artist Jimmy Young quite moving in "Faith Can Move Mountains." He has a robust style and a tip-top song to put over. Reverse is "Moon Above Malaya," which sounds just like the way Dorothy Lamour looks in a sarong. It's Y6435.

★ ★ ★

DESPITE the fact that Frankie Laine sings "and" as "hand," I'd vote "The Ruby and the Pearl" his most exciting number — strikingly original lyrics, brilliant support from Paul Weston's orchestra, and singing of terrific intensity. The flip to DO3554 is a nautical novelty called "The Mermaid"—slick and racy, with lyrics as smart as a millionaire's yacht. An ideal backing to the sombre glow of "The Ruby." I suspect you'll be buying this, but fast.—BERNARD FLETCHER.

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THE WORLD'S BUSIEST WOMAN

Intimate glimpses of Queen's life as wife and mother

Twenty-six-year-old Queen Elizabeth is probably the most hard-working woman in the world to-day, the most photographed, and in her Coronation year of 1953 the most publicised, but she also has a life of her own.

Fascinating glimpses of her private life in the Royal family circle as well as new angles on her arduous round of State duties are given on this page in the first of a series of excerpts from Margaret Saville's book "Our Queen."

Few writers about the Royal Family know so much of Queen Elizabeth's home life as Margaret Saville, author of "Royal Sisters," "The British Royal Family At Home," and other authoritative books.

By MARGARET SAVILLE

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

SHE stands five foot four, though her high heels make her appear taller, and she moves with the composed, well-trained grace that long ago became habitual to her.

She has thick, golden-brown hair which is naturally curly and which she likes to wear as short as her dignity may permit. She has an extremely beautiful complexion, clear and firm and fresh, with warm coloring so that she never needs to use rouge.

Her eyes are blue, wide-set, and fringed with light-brown lashes which she darkens a little each morning. Her mouth reveals the firmness of her character, just as the line of her chin indicates her tenacity once she has made a decision.

Her official name is Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor, but she signs "Elizabeth R," because she is the Queen, Elizabetha Regina according to the centuries-old traditional designation for the wearing of the Crown.

She is, perhaps, the most hard-working woman in the world, bound by her regal duties from morning till midnight, liable even to be wakened from her sleep if necessary.

She can take only one day's complete holiday in the whole year, at Christmas, which is the only time the monarch is allowed to forget the obligations and tasks of the State and spend a few precious hours in peace and privacy.

And because the Queen feels that her people would appreciate the gesture, she has decided to break into her one holiday to give an annual Royal broadcast message during the afternoon of Christmas Day.

Every morning, wherever she is, the Queen must deal with her correspondence and see her secretaries and official advisers, receive visitors, and give formal audiences.

On Sundays some of these duties are relaxed, but the Queen must still attend to the big scarlet leather dispatch boxes, conveyed by special messengers, which contain all the highly secret papers about the nation's affairs.

They are reports from the United Kingdom and Commonwealth Governments, some sent by the British Prime Minister's own hand, and others from Cabinet Ministers, heads of the Church and the Services, foreign Ambassadors, and diplomatic officers.

Each case is locked by the person who sends it, and the Queen herself keeps the gold master-key that opens them all.

Twice a day, morning and evening, for 364 days in the year, the Queen sits down at a desk to attend to them.

They reach her if she is travelling in the Royal train or on board ship, and she has several times dealt with them while flying in an aircraft between her public engagements.

"Doing the boxes" is as much the motif of the monarch's life as the Royal monogram with its crowned crest.

Then, too, the Queen needs always to be within easy reach of the telephone.

One free day a year

Even the bathrooms of the Royal residences have their extension instruments, and telephones are carried in the Royal train ready to be plugged into the line beside the track wherever a halt is made.

When the Queen is out of town and has left her residence for a few hours, perhaps enjoying some fishing at Balmoral or riding round her Norfolk estate, a messenger with a motor-cycle always stands waiting.

He is ready to take the Queen the envelope containing any urgent communication which her secretary may receive for her over the direct private telephone line from Buckingham Palace.

The Queen's day begins at half-past seven each morning when her quiet-voiced, dark-haired Scottish maid, Ruby Macdonald, opens the brocade curtains of her big bedroom on the first floor of Buckingham Palace.

It is a high, old-fashioned apartment with pastel blue walls picked out with gilt and elaborately carved antique walnut furniture

There is a deep brocade-covered couch at the foot of the wide bed, and in one of the two windows stands a round table at which the Queen takes her breakfast, probably wearing her favorite peach satin housecoat.

It is a simple meal, tea and fruit and toast and jam with occasionally an egg dish, served on the Queen's personal china, white egg-shell with her monogram in gold.

As the Queen eats she glances through the two newspapers Ruby has brought her, one of them a picture paper. By half-past eight the Queen has bathed and is starting to dress.

Ruby knows exactly what clothes are wanted because she has already been provided by the lady-in-waiting with a duplicate of the neat typewritten itinerary for the day that lay on the Queen's breakfast tray, just to refresh the Royal memory so there can be no misunderstandings about the times of the various appointments and engagements.

Glancing at it, the Queen told Ruby what she would wear on each occasion.

Now the maid has taken all the clothes out of their cupboards and chests in the adjoining wardrobe-room and brings them into the bedroom for the Queen to put on the first outfit for the day.

Usually it is a plain tailored dress, fine wool in winter, silk in summer, with neat court shoes, and the Queen's favorite triple string of pearls and pearl stud-earrings.

These are what she would herself describe as her "working clothes," in which she spends the morning performing her office routines.

At nine o'clock the Queen goes along the narrow corridor with the pale blue walls and rich scarlet carpet to her private sitting-room.

Under the window is an antique, flat-topped mahogany desk on which the Queen's private letters await her.

Each of these is from either a relative or intimate friend who knows the special method of address and marking which ensures that the letter goes directly to the Queen instead of being opened by one of her secretaries like the rest of her enormous correspondence.

The Duke of Edinburgh usually comes along from his suite across the corridor at this time of the day, and then in a few minutes the white door opens to admit their children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne.

At half-past nine, after devoting a little time to playing with her children, the Queen is walking downstairs to her large study which is on the ground floor, its long window looking directly out across the gravel walk to the fine herbaceous border which is the pride of the Palace gardens.

The Queen's study has restful green walls and antique furniture.

Discussions with cook

She works at a flat-topped desk with two telephones at her elbow, one an ordinary line going through the large switchboard room at the Palace where two male operators are always on duty, day and night, the other a special private line over which conversations are "scrambled" in transmission so nobody can listen-in either by accident or design.

There is also an intercommunication panel, newly installed on the suggestion of the Duke of Edinburgh, so that the Queen can quickly speak to the various members of her Court in their different rooms.

The Queen's staff has already opened and sorted her official correspondence, prepared the many documents she must sign, arranged the letters it is necessary for her to read right through, typed short precis of longer reports to save her time, and provided notes to refresh her memory of the persons she is to receive this morning and the matters they will discuss with her.

Characteristically thorough and painstaking, the Queen dictates her answers to many of her letters in full, and even makes time to read some of those written untidily on cheap paper which begin: "Dear Queen—I am wondering if you can help me . . ."

There are so many things to be written and signed that the Queen has to attend to them in batches so that she does not get cramp.

More than once she has sat back in her carved walnut chair, rubbing her wrist tenderly while she received her Scottish housekeeper, Mrs. Ferguson, paying her daily visit to report upon her domestic affairs at eleven o'clock, or her chef, Mrs. Alma McKie, suggesting menus and asking the Queen's choice for some forthcoming State dinner, reception, or other function.

Scandinavian - born Mrs. McKie was cook to the Queen when she was Princess Elizabeth and lived at Clarence House. Mrs. McKie is the only woman ever to preside over the great basement kitchen quarters at Buckingham Palace.

She specialises in smorgasbord, the cold buffet of many dishes which the Duke of Edinburgh frankly enjoys more than any elaborately served hot meal, and in fish and egg dishes—both extremely popular at the Queen's table.

Her ginger shortbread often tempts the Queen to forget the fact that the slimming diet she likes to follow for a couple of weeks from time to time, to maintain her figure proportions, strictly forbids snacks between the day's three main meals.

There will often be some of Mrs. McKie's shortbread or sweet biscuits on the tray with the silver pot of coffee which a page carries to the Queen's desk soon after eleven o'clock.

After this refreshment, the Queen usually begins to receive her visitors.

If they are particularly important, she will first go to her own apartments to change her dress.

Whenever possible, her equerry arranges for the Queen to give her last audience of the morning at half-past twelve so that she then has a few minutes' leisure before lunch is served at 1.15.

Then the Queen joins her children, probably playing in the garden again after their own noonday meal.

Next week: The Queen's Clothes.

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Pantees *with a purpose*

by Prestige

Specially designed to eliminate all those irritating features that pantees can have. The fullness of cut allows complete freedom of movement and ensures that the waistband remains in position even when seated . . . . . all styles may be worn over corsets or girdles . . . . . the elastic in all garments is fully guaranteed . . . . . the reinforced crotch provides greater comfort and longer wear. The long-wearing, high quality fabrics used in **Prestige** Pantees include Nylon, Summer Silk, Herringbone, Thrills, Cotton and Swami Satyn. Ask at your favourite store for **Prestige** Pantees . . . . . Pantees with a purpose . . . . . to give comfort and longer wear.

Short fitting leg style in Summer Silk fabric, Pantee 230, priced from **13/6.** Also available in nylon, Pantee 900, priced from **29/6,** Thrills Pantee 366, priced from **12/6,** and Herringbone Pantee 120, priced from **8/6.**

Long loose leg style for the larger figure, Summer Silk fabric Pantee 231, priced from **15/3.** Herringbone fabric Pantee 122, priced from **9/-.**

Cotton Dinkie, snug fitting brief of pure cotton, priced from **7/11.**

Spenderpants — with detachable suspenders. Ideal for summer wear. In Swami Satyn fabric, No. SP.401, priced from **30/-.**

Long fitting leg style for the larger figure, Summer Silk fabric, Pantee 232, priced from **15/3.**

Trimmed short pantee in Summer Silk fabric, Pantee 233, priced from **18/-.** Matching slips and vests available.

Prestige Pantees are sold by SEAT measurement. All you need to know are the inches around your seat to be sure of a perfect fit. No guesswork . . . . . no troublesome exchanges . . . . . just perfect fit. There is a size and style to give complete comfort to every figure type.

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Worth Reporting

ON February 20, more than 1000 members of the Eighth Division who were prisoners of war in Malaya, Burma, and Thailand will gather in Sydney.

This will be one of many gatherings throughout Australia, both public and private, commemorating the fall of Singapore on February 15, 1942.

After a service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney, in memory of fellow-P.O.W.s who did not return, they will go on to a reunion in the Sydney Town Hall.

Among those planning to be present is Padre "Happy Harry" Thorpe, of Bathurst, N.S.W., who recently made a pilgrimage to Malaya and the Burma-Thailand "railway of death."

Padre Thorpe visited the main Thailand war cemetery at Kanchanaburi, where many Australians who worked on the railway are buried.

"The cemetery is very beautiful," he told us, "and I was glad to see that the graves of all the men I had buried while we were working on the railway had been found. They are now buried at Kan'buri."

After seven years of peace, the railway itself and the cemeteries are the only concrete reminders of the wartime experience.

Part of the railway is still used for bringing wood from the jungle for the Siamese railways.

Padre Thorpe stayed at Kan'buri for a few days and lived in a little two-roomed rest-house built in the cemetery area for visitors. He was the first Australian to stay there.

He was very touched by the friendliness of the Thai people at Kan'buri.

"They seemed very happy to see an ex-P.O.W.," he said. "One of them said, 'Tell my English and Australian friends I miss them so much, and please write.'

"I hope that other ex-P.O.W.s will make the trip," he said. "It's a wonderful experience to go back."

"Just this once he's going to arrive at Grandma's clean."

Playwright's skit on his own play

AUSTRALIAN playwright Hugh Hastings has written a six-minute skit on his current success "Seagulls Over Sorrento" for Bill Orr's revue "Metropolitan Merry-Go-Round" at Sydney's Metropolitan Theatre.

Entitled "Larks Over the 'Loo," it is set in the powder-room of a W.R.A.N.S. mess. All the characters are women, but just to make it more confusing they are being played by male members of the cast.

Most of the lyrics for the revue have been written by Jerry Donovan, who has just graduated in dentistry from Sydney University.

To music by another young Australian, Lance Mulcahey, Jerry's lyrics range from sentimental ballads to light-hearted skits on local conditions and personalities.

Well-known stage and radio personalities Daphne Winslow, Diana Davidson, Kerry Norton, Shirley Brindley, Leonard Thiele, David Nettheim, and Alistair Duncan romp their way through the sketches.

"A Victorian Lament," by David Nettheim, describes the dizzy feelings of Queen Victoria's statue in the centre of the tram "circus" in Queen's Square, Sydney.

"A Streetcar Named Perspire or The Importance of Being Frank" is a gay attack on the worst in American films. "Kiss Me, Hamlet" is a mad marriage of Shakespeare and musical comedy which includes an episode featuring King Lear on ice.

Trans-Atlantic cat-call

SIAMESE cats are noted as vocalists, but Bex, idolised pet of Arthur Bush, of the B.B.C., holds the record, says our London office. When Bex was persuaded to give tongue in a programme for Canada, "Postmark U.K.," recently, he was received so well in Montreal that a Sealyham in one listener's home began to bark.

His owner, Mrs. Margaret Hay, wrote to Arthur Bush saying the dog refused to be quietened, and was still rushing about the house an hour later, unaware that the object of his frantic search was 3000 miles away.

LONDON TALK
By Michael Plant

SCENE-STEALER at Norman Hartnell's spring collection was French actress Colette Marchand, who has a top role in the film "Moulin Rouge."

When Colette entered the salon, every photographer forgot the show in the scramble to get a picture of her hat.

The hat was made from human hair—exactly the same color as Colette's own—in the shape of a high cone. From a hole in the top a tuft of her hair was pulled through to give an effect rather like a volcano in eruption.

* * *

PASSENGERS on the Golden Arrow train to Paris were stunned when they looked out of the window as they sped through a tiny country station in Kent, and saw the Queen, Prince Philip, and little Prince Charles standing on the platform waving. The Royal Family had been spending the week-end with friends.

Prince Charles, who is mad about trains, had insisted that his parents should take him down to the local station.

* * *

AUSTRALIANS in the news: Pianist Geoffrey Parsons, who left Australia as Peter Dawson's accompanist, has made a name for himself as a solo artist. He has just finished recording a special spot in Gene Kelly's new ballet film "Invitation to the Dance," and is now making a concert tour in Switzerland.

A new late-night show, "Parkland Revue," will have a strong Australian influence—the sets and costumes have been designed by Jon Bannenberg and the choreography is by Rex Reid.

* * *

"THE most exciting telephone call of my life," says 26-year-old Australian singer Joan Sutherland of the telephone call she received from David Webster, director of Covent Garden Opera House, offering her an opportunity to sing the principal role in "Masked Ball" that night.

Star Helen Werth had a sore throat.

Joan went on in her place and scored a success with the critics.

Two versions of the Bible:

As little children . . .

This week's passage for comparison of the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible with the King James Bible comes from the Gospel according to St. Matthew 18:1-4.

King James Version

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Revised Standard Version

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (2) And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them, (3) and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (4) Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

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in 5 distinguished perfumes

The new Coty Talc, with the amazing G 11 ingredient, gives *all-over* body protection—something under-arm deodorants cannot possibly give. Now, in one simple after-bath operation, the pleasures of a smooth, cool, beautifully-perfumed talc can be enjoyed at the same time as complete freedom from any development of perspiration odours.

Coty Talc stops perspiration odours before they start. It is really amazing how the special germicidal ingredient added to Coty Talc goes into action by immediately neutralising the effect of the bacterial action of perspiration. Another marvellous thing about this special ingredient is that it in no way affects the enchanting fragrance for which Coty Talc has been long famous—and that means, of course, that not only is there lasting personal freshness, but *lasting fragrance:* you and your clothes remain fresh, air-sweet and beautifully perfumed the live long day.

Soothes like a real anti-irritant. Even if you have a very sensitive skin you can be sure of the cool, soothing action of Coty Talc. You'll bless it, too, if you are in the habit of shaving under the arm.

A magnificent "buy." If you're budget-conscious—and who isn't?—you'll welcome the thought that you need pay so little for this dual-purpose talc deodorant. No need for separate purchases of costly "sticky" liquids and messy creams!

* *Smooth, cool, beautifully perfumed talc, PLUS the miracle G 11 ingredient.*

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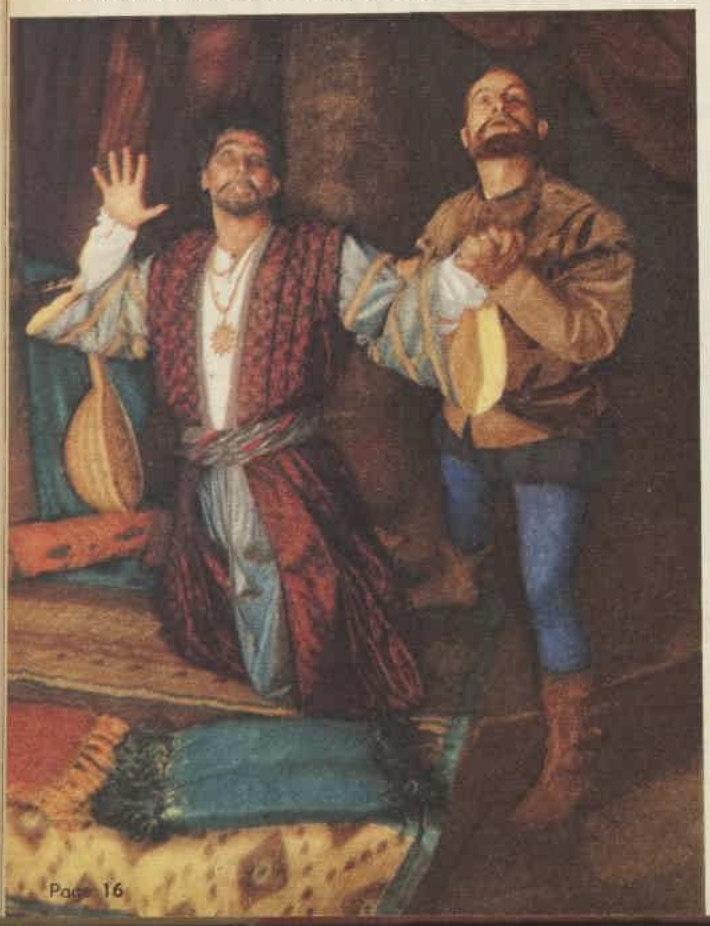
"SO THAT, DEAR LORDS, if I be left behind, a moth of peace, and he go to the war, the rites for which I love him are bereft me . . ." Desdemona (Barbara Jefford), right, Brabantio (Kenneth Wynne), left, Lodovico (Keith Michell), Iago (Leo McKern), Othello (Anthony Quayle), and Cassio (Terence Longdon).



"WITNESS that here Iago doth give up the execution of his wit, hands, heart, to wrong'd Othello's service." In the scene at left Iago (Leo McKern), right, promises Othello (Anthony Quayle) he will kill Cassio.

"O, CASSIO, whence came this? This is some token from a newer friend; To the felt absence now I feel a cause." Above, Bianca (Jane Holland) with Cassio, who gives her Desdemona's handkerchief.

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Stratford-upon-Avon players in

"OTHELLO"

★ Australia will soon see Anthony Quayle's new production of Shakespeare's tragedy "Othello," played by the Stratford-upon-Avon touring company. The Australian season will begin at the Tivoli, Sydney, on April 21, with this production. The company is at present touring New Zealand.

"I WILL DENY thee nothing; Whereon, I do beseech thee, grant me this, To leave me but a little to myself," Othello (Anthony Quayle) replies to his wife, Desdemona (Barbara Jefford), as she intercedes for Cassio.

"AND HAVE WE NOT affections, desires for sport, and frailty, as men have? Then let them use us well; else let them know, the ills we do their ills instruct us to," Emilia (Joan MacArthur) says to Desdemona, front.

"IF YOU RETHINK YOURSELF of any crime unreconcil'd as yet to heaven and grace, solicit for it straight," Othello tells Desdemona. This scene is the climax of the play when Othello, wrongly believing Desdemona has been unfaithful to him with Cassio, smothers her. These pictures were taken by Alec Murray at a "run in" performance of the play at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, before the company left England.

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Rosella

Baked Beans

MOTHER

"You'd better take your overcoat if you're going to the South Pole."

BUTCH

"Butch has never been a worry to me. He always hurries straight home from work."

It seems to me

By

Dorothy Drain

FEBRUARY is a tag-end sort of a month. The year has lost the brave promise of January, and summer, blazing into a last flame, prepares to expire sulkily in March.

The cotton dresses which began the season so brightly show signs of wilting. The shops display winter clothes, but it takes dogged determination to try them on or to believe that they will ever be really necessary.

Nor have the autumn windows, no matter how elegant, that compelling gaiety of the premature spring displays in August. There is, too, another black mark against February. Only in leap years is there a chance of five pay days.

* * *

A BILL making it illegal for cats to prey on birds has been introduced in the State Legislature of Illinois, U.S.A.

Senator William Knox, a birdlover, introduced the bill. The former Governor of Illinois, Adlai Stevenson, vetoed a similar bill in 1949, saying that it was in the nature of cats to do a certain amount of "unescorted roaming."

Two black cats which I pass on the way to the office (one belongs to a florist and one to a fruit shop) evinced mild interest when I mentioned the matter to them.

One said: "The State election candidates have been doing plenty of earbashing round here, but I didn't hear any of them mention cats. Mentioned pretty well everything else.

"Anyhow, an unenforceable law is a bad law. If they start anything like that in Sydney I'll move to Broken Hill."

* * *

ONE of our girls, reading that heavy eye make-up was all the rage overseas, decided to be in it.

She laid it on pretty thick, and her new appearance received gratifying notice from the female staff. Even her husband liked it, but other male reaction was not so good.

One kind-hearted young man stopped dead in his tracks and said with concern: "Oh, I say, you do look ill. Shouldn't you go home?" Another man, a less sensitive type, burst into hearty laughter and said: "Well, you certainly HAVE copped it. Ran into a door, I suppose?"

* * *

A RADIO programme called "Gangbusters" has been banned from a prison in Minnesota. Prisoners don't like it because the crooks always get shot or captured.

As one convict probably said to another: "My goodness, when I turn on the radio I like to be entertained. What I always say is, 'There's enough sadness in real life.'"

A BOOK which will be the despair of people who live in small, modern homes has been published in America.

It is a "Dictionary of Discards," lists 8000 items which may clutter up junk-rooms, and shows what can be made of them.

For instance, the works of an old alarm clock may be converted to a furnace damper control or a motor for small toys. (The author doesn't say how.) Handbags can be turned into shoe insoles.

Horrifying, isn't it? Obviously the book ought to be banned from homes containing handy husbands or enterprising children.

The strength of mind to discard junk is one of the most necessary attributes for a tidy and peaceful life.

Besides, I have no faith in the author after learning that he lists several uses for bobby-pins.

Bobby-pins are not discarded. They disappear. In wartime, when they were scarce, one had to fish under carpets to keep up the supply.

The manufacturers, I think, use some mysterious substance which causes them to disintegrate into thin air after a given time, thus keeping up the demand.

* * *

POSTSCRIPT to the paragraph a fortnight ago concerning "The Times" correspondence re the word "earlierise."

A later copy of "The Times" provides two more gems for the language. One is in a letter from a Mr. Patrick Austen, of Montreal, who describes himself as a collector of such words. His hobby, he says, began when he read on a label of Californian dried fruits that they had been "softenised."

The other comes from a Yorkshire reader, who says that during the war he received a communication from the War Office marked "secret." It was followed next day by a letter authorising him to "desecretise" the previous message.

* * *

A SCHOOL in London claims that it will teach people to revive "the lost art of conversation."

"Hot enough for you, Tom?" "My word, "I reckon that we're bound to have a storm."

"Temperature's over ninety, so I heard."

"That so? The weather's certainly been warm."

So, with such talk, we pass the time of day.
Not conversation. No. Yet to forbear
Until one had a thought worthwhile to say
Would leave uneasy silence, full of fear;
And humans, chattering idly on their way.
Keep thus the wolves of loneliness at bay.

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Cottee's real fruit flavours mingle merrily with 'most any fruit. Try this one: 1 pkt. Cottee's Fruit Salad Jelly, ½ pint boiling water, 1½ cups fruit salad (if using pineapple, cook it first). Make up Cottee's Jelly with only ½ pt. boiling water. When cool, but not set, stir in the fruit salad. Pour into wetted mould to set . . . then serve as real party magic.

Jelly Sparkle

To make eyes twinkle. Make up Cottee's Fruit Jelly. When set, turn on to wetted paper and chop into small particles. Pile into serving dishes and decorate with segments of sweet oranges, bananas or other fruit.

Jelly Parfait

It looks elaborate, but isn't. Set Cottee's Jelly in a square container (a cake tin is good). Turn on to paper and cut into cubes. Arrange in serving dishes, with alternating layers of jelly cubes and creamy custard.

Jelly Trifle

It's real party magic when you use Cottee's Jelly. Cut left-over cake into blocks. Spread lightly with jam or sprinkle with 2 tablespoons fruit juice. Make your favourite Cottee's Jelly, pour over cake and allow to set.

Summer "Coola"

Here's a party sweet icy cold and fun to eat. Set halves of stewed or canned pears in Cottee's Lime Coola Jelly. (The syrup from the canned pears may be used in place of some of the water when making jelly.)

Cottee's REAL FRUIT JELLIES

BY THE MAKERS OF THE WORLD-FAMED PASSIONA

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B.28

THE TEAM AT WORK. Concentration is shown on the ringers' faces as they read the scores. From left, Lionel Clifford, Bernard Clifford, Arthur Bentley, and Alf Foan. Bentley and Foan are both dairy farmers.

They make music by ringing bells

By WINFRED BISSET, staff reporter

A club of hand-bell ringers which is believed to be unique in Australia is still active in the farming district of Brookhampton, 130 miles from Perth, where it was first established in 1902.

THE art of playing music by ringing hand bells of polished brass has been handed down from father to son throughout the club's existence.

Bell-ringing is the hobby of members, but performances by the team of six players are not allowed to interfere with the serious business of farming.

February and early March are the only months in which the team can accept engagements away from home. "The cows are out then and the apples are not yet in," says Bernard Clifford, leader of the team and president of the club.

Other members of the team are Lionel Clifford, Harold Cain, Arthur Bentley, Alf Foan, and Eric Gibbons.

Harold Cain's father, Bob Cain, is the club secretary.

Tentative arrangements were made for the team to play at a big concert in Perth last November, but had to be cancelled. "Not that we didn't want to play, but it's milking and harvesting then," said Bernard.

However, the team will play at concerts arranged by the Perth Repertory Club early in March.

The minutes of the club's first meeting in 1902 still exist. It was then called the Thomson's Brook Music Club, and was started by Mr. Frank Young, who came from the Western Australian goldfields, bringing the bells with him.

As a member of the Coolgardie Glee Club he had played those bells on the goldfields in the "roaring nineties."

After Mr. Young left the district, the club was renamed the Brookhampon Bell Club.

Brookhampton residents gave it enthusiastic support, and the whole district joined, with a subscription of one shilling a year.

RINGER Eric Gibbons, of "Glengyle," Brookhampton, practises with the bells.

Mr. Alf Clifford, who is the father of Lionel and Bernard, and a pioneer farmer of the district, was one of Mr. Young's first pupils. He told me of the early days of the club. "Some of the members didn't have a note of music in them, but by degrees we sifted out the playing from the non-playing members, and then we started to work up a repertoire.

"Our first aim as a club was to buy the bells from Mr. Young. There were 37 of them and they ranged over three octaves. The price was £30.

"For a year we practised, then started giving concerts at The Brook—that's what we call this part of the world.

"The district supported us and in no time we had the money.

"During the 1914-18 war we lost six of our good players, who were killed overseas. And during the last war two more of our players were killed. But we've picked up the threads again."

When I arrived at Brookhampton, Lionel and Bernard Clifford left off digging a well on the family property, "Killarney," to have a practice performance.

Another player, Harold Cain, stopped unloading superphosphate to take part.

THIRD GENERATION has its first lesson in bell-ringing from grandfather Alf Clifford, of "Killarney," Brookhampton. His grandsons are, from left, Douglas and Neville, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Clifford, and Leonard, Gordon, and Peter, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Clifford.

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Australian artist paints celebrities

Princess Margaret, new G.G. among patrons

By SUSAN BARRIE, staff reporter

When Australian artist James Govett arrived in Melbourne recently on a six months' visit, he received a personal letter from Princess Margaret, wishing him a pleasant holiday.

He brought with him his portrait of the Princess, painted for the Victoria League in Melbourne, to be presented by a patron.

ARTIST JAMES GOVETT puts the finishing touches to a portrait of Princess Margaret which he painted in London. The picture has been given to Victoria League in Melbourne.

"THE Princess does not like sitting for a portrait, so I was fortunate to have the opportunity to do this one," Mr. Govett said.

"I was able to do it only because the secretary to the Duchy of Cornwall, the Queen's Estate, arranged for me to see her at 10 Buckingham Gate.

"I did the portrait from the rough sketches I made then," Mr. Govett said.

Painting celebrities is almost an everyday job to James Govett. Since he left Melbourne six years ago he has painted many distinguished people, including Australia's Governor-General designate, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim.

"Sir William was the most co-operative person I have ever painted," Mr. Govett told me. "He swept up to my studio in a big black car, dressed in mufti and prepared to spare me the whole afternoon. He was surprised when I finished my sketches in half an hour.

"He is a very charming man and vitally interested in art."

The tall, quiet, 38-year-old artist, who was a bank clerk before he went overseas, first became interested in portraiture while serving with the Australian Army in New Guinea during the war.

Unable to carry large canvases, he experimented with 6in. x 8in. portraits of soldiers and native children.

"I found this the ideal size for children's portraits, and developed a special technique for painting them," he said.

"It was very useful when I went to England, because my painting career started with commissions for children's portraits."

Children are still his favorite subjects, because they are usually less selfconscious than adults—and the portraits look more vital.

"But they are a bit difficult, because they refuse to pose," Mr. Govett said.

"I often have to get down on the floor and play soldiers, and it is sometimes a struggle to get the picture done.

Locked in

"WHEN I painted General Hickman's grandchildren, Mary and Tom, their mother locked them in with me and left me to my fate!

"Tom climbed up the curtains while I was trying to paint his sister."

When Govett arrived in England he established himself in a large studio on the Thames "which cost the earth," and settled down to work.

Within a short while he had painted such notable people as Clifford Bax, Sir Clive Burn, Lady Wakehurst, Sir Ronald Cross, and Viscount Bruce.

"Lord Bruce is probably the most distinguished Australian in London and was a very interesting subject," said the artist.

"The picture was sent to Rome for the Food and Agriculture Organisation."

James Govett's mother, Mrs. Nellie Govett, started painting when she was seven.

"I used to spend my pennies on paints instead of on sweets as other children did," she told me.

"Later I studied at the National Gallery—under an assumed name because my parents disapproved. They thought art too Bohemian and not quite respectable."

When James and his twin brother, George, were toddlers and her third son, John, was a baby, Mrs. Govett took lessons from Melbourne artist Max Meldrum.

"At first he told me to go home and take care of my babies, but when he saw how keen I was he agreed to let me stay," she said with a reminiscent smile.

Mother and son

MRS. GOVETT'S reward is her son's success. She visited him in London in 1950. Early this year some of her pictures were exhibited with his at a joint exhibition in Melbourne.

James Govett also worked for 12 years with Meldrum, but his overseas studies have led him to develop an individual style.

He toured the Continent on a motor cycle "living" at galleries and painting landscapes in each country as he went. But London is his spiritual home and he considers it the most stimulating city in the world for an artist.

"There is so much work to be done and always something fresh to be painted," he said. "Even the man in the street seems to have some cultural interest.

Finds apathy here

"I FIND Australians have an almost neurotic apathy to art."

Govett, who prefers portraits to landscapes, says he tries to achieve something between the abstract and the academic in his work.

"I try always to depict the subconscious to show the underlying character of a subject," he explained. "I notice people usually have a positive reaction to my pictures.

"They either think them very good or very bad. Luckily, more think they are good. Anyway, portraits take time to get used to. People like them more as they live with them."

Govett admits he dislikes painting women as a rule.

"They expect me to take at least 10 years off their age—which is simple enough if you use a flattering light and paint out the lines to lift the face," he said with a twinkle.

"The result is just a pretty picture, lacking in character and interest."

One society woman whom he painted "swimming in satin and sables," with the wrinkles carefully eliminated, later complained that the picture made her look twice her age.

A bachelor, James Govett considers art and matrimony don't mix.

"An artist should never marry," he said. "Art should take up one's whole life, and if you try to combine it with a wife one or the other must suffer."

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR WILLIAM SLIM, who will be the next Governor-General of Australia, at a final sitting for his portrait, which was painted by Mr. Govett in London.

A woman's privilege

Women have many time-honoured privileges, though some, regrettably, are not always observed these days. But few will question the modern woman's privilege of deciding how to plan her own finances. To help her, the Bank of New South Wales offers a cheque account for her personal use. Paying by cheque is a safe, simple way of keeping the balance between income and expenditure. If *you* wish to organize your finances in this modern, easy-to-operate way, call and see the Manager of your nearest branch of the "Wales". He will be glad to give you full particulars.

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And as he sleeps, you wonder. When he grows up what new worlds will he conquer, what victories will he win, what struggles endure? And will he be bold or timid, rich or poor, sad or gay? But most of all you hope and pray, at this quiet interval of the day when the children have gone to bed—hope and pray that your child will enjoy that most inestimably precious treasure of all, without which everything else is dimmed, *Health*. Think, every night when you lay him down to sleep, what you have done that day to safeguard his health. Think now of the food he eats, the clothes he wears. Think now, too, of all that doctors and nurses and mothers alike say about 'VIYELLA.'

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Annette Kellerman's own story

Film Fan-Fare

By M. J. McMAHON

● Esther Williams plays the role of Annette Kellerman, one of the first Australian women swimming champions, in Metro's technicolor biography titled "Million Dollar Mermaid."

WATER BALLET (left). In Hollywood Annette creates a spectacular aquatic extravaganza and also stars in a film. On the last day of filming the tank cracks and explodes. Annette is severely injured, but swims her way to health and strength once more.

"BUT, OFFICER!" protests Annette (Esther Williams), above, to a policeman who arrests and charges her with indecent exposure for wearing a one-piece bathing costume. Later she popularises the style. In centre is manager Jimmy Sullivan (Victor Mature).

FRAIL, 10-year-old Annette (Donna Corcoran), right, alarms her father (Walter Pidgeon) by disappearing from their Sydney home to go swimming. He finds she has taught herself to use her legs, is able to discard leg-braces. Later she becomes a champion swimmer.

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1 APPREHENSIVE Rev. Willoughby (Cecil Kellaway), his blind granddaughter, Joan (Deborah Kerr), and British residents fear native uprising.

2 CONFIDENT of a welcome, opportunist pilot Steve Gibbs (Alan Ladd) lands a cargo of guns and ammunition for sale to the Maharajah.

3 INTERVIEW with Maharajah's representative Ram Singh (Charles Boyer) backfires when guns are impounded.

4 ATTRACTED to Joan, Steve wangles an interview through her with the Maharajah, but Ram Singh's presence prevents armament deal going through.

TRIBAL WAR DRAMA

5 OFFER by Steve to fly out residents at a price is refused by Joan and others, accepted by Lizette (Corinne Calvet), left. Steve has to turn back.

★ **"Thunder in the East," Paramount's story of a small band of English people trapped in the Indian State of Gandahar at the outbreak of a tribal war, is from the novel by Alan Moorehead.**

Alan Ladd plays the role of a tough American pilot who is reformed by his love for a blind English girl, Deborah Kerr. Charles Boyer plays an idealistic Indian who opposes the use of force.

Tobruk Rats in big battle film

By LEE CARROLL, in Hollywood

Hollywood big-budget wartime drama "The Desert Rats" is a film with a strong Australian interest.

AUSTRALIAN actors Chips Rafferty, Charles Tingwell, Michael Pate, and John O'Malley play main feature roles in the film, which recounts the exploits of Australian servicemen in the Middle East during World War II.

Chips Rafferty flew to Hollywood specially to play the role of an Australian sergeant in the film.

Telling the Allied side of the Libyan desert campaign during World War II, "The Desert Rats" is said to be Hollywood's answer to critics of "The Desert Fox." This controversial wartime movie of last year starred James Mason in a tough but warm-hearted conception of Nazi Field-Marshal Erwin Rommel.

Star of the new film is Welsh actor Richard Burton, who plays a sadistic British officer attached to an Australian unit.

Arrogant in khaki and scarlet regimentals, James Mason plays the Rommel role again. This time he gives a brief, vastly different interpretation of the character.

English film and stage star Robert Newton portrays a British-born ranker in the A.I.F.

The Australian Ninth Division is clearly identified in battle scenes, and almost all of the Allied troops depicted are Australians.

"The Desert Rats" does not attempt to retell the story of the Eighth Army in Africa. It deals only with the siege of Tobruk and the men of the Tobruk garrison in the anxious days of 1941 when the Libyan coast town was isolated by Rommel's Afrika Korps.

An American, Richard Murphy, wrote the script for "The Desert Rats." During the war Murphy was a liaison officer with the Ninth Division in New Guinea, after its withdrawal from the Middle East in 1942.

Together with first-hand experience of Australian servicemen in combat, Murphy is said to have a comprehensive knowledge of their way of living and their slang.

Battle sequences were shot near Borrego Springs, a Californian desert town

CHIPS RAFFERTY, watched by a newsman, stoops low to enter a command post in "The Desert Rats" on location.

6 APPEAL by residents to Singh for the release of impounded weapons against the impending attack is refused. Singh persists in policy or non-opposition but, urged by Steve, agrees to meet native leader.

7 EXHAUSTED Singh, maimed by the tribesmen, manages to stagger back to camp. Later Steve is allowed to take delivery of small plane to transport the women from danger area. Joan refuses to leave.

8 MARRIAGE of Steve and Joan takes place. At tribesmen attack, Ram Singh decides he has been wrong and produces the guns. With a chance of holding out until relief arrives, the party faces the enemy.

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They contain no Calomel or other Mercury Compounds.

IS YOUR CHILD EXCEPTIONAL?

Australian educationists cannot agree on whether brighter-than-average children should get special attention at school. Some say they should and others say they should not.

An interesting article on this important problem appears in the February issue of A.M. It contains information that will interest all parents. For that reason, don't miss your copy of the

FEBRUARY A.M., NOW ON SALE

Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

★★ *Hunted*

THE British thriller "Hunted" is a superior film built around the experiences of a man (Dirk Bogarde) and a small boy (Jon Whitely) while being chased by police between congested London, Scottish border country, and a west coast fishing village.

As action begins, a jealous husband (Bogarde) kills a rival, and the youngster who is running away from home because of a childish misdemeanor chances upon the scene of the crime.

To protect himself the criminal takes the boy and heads up country. En route a rough affection springs up between Bogarde and Jon.

The script behind "Hunted" leaves too many untied ends to be wholly satisfactory, but this heart-warming relationship between the man and boy lifts the film out of ordinary chase melodramatics.

By degrees the plight of Bogarde wins your sympathy, but six-year-old Jon is everybody's darling from the start.

Elizabeth Sellars gives a neat study as the unfaithful wife.

In Sydney—Victory.

★ *Plymouth Adventure*

THIS Hollywood-style historical drama depicts in technicolor the rigors endured by Pilgrim Fathers who sailed from England aboard the Mayflower to pioneer the New World.

Master of the Mayflower is cynical, embittered Captain Christopher Jones (Spencer Tracy); among the passengers are Van Johnson, Gene Tierney, and Leo Genn (Genn brings insight to his idealistic role), Dawn Addams, and a covey of M.G.M. feature players.

Believing that they are to become part of the Virginia settlement, Mayflower pioneers are landed instead on an inhospitable strip of New England coastline, hundreds of miles north of their objective. They remain there.

En route the howling gale that almost wrecks Mayflower, and Captain Tracy's unhistorical pass at noble Miss Tierney are enlivening.

Torn between love for the lusty skipper and feelings of duty toward her steadfast husband, the lady resolves it all by slipping overboard one quiet night.

In Sydney.—St. James.

CITY FILM GUIDE

Films reviewed

CENTURY.—★★ "Sudden Fear," thriller, starring Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, Gloria Grahame. Plus featurettes.

EMBASSY.—★ "Lady Godiva Rides Again," British comedy, starring Pauline Stroud. Plus featurettes.

ESQUIRE.—★★ "Les Miserables," period drama by Victor Hugo, starring Michael Rennie, Robert Newton, Sylvia Sidney. Plus featurettes.

LIBERTY.—★★★ "Quo Vadis?" technicolor drama of early Rome, starring Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr, Leo Genn, Peter Ustinov.

LYCEUM.—★★★ "The Importance of Being Earnest," British technicolor comedy, starring Michael Redgrave, Joan Greenwood, Michael Denison, Dorothy Tutin. Plus ★ "Assassin For Hire," thriller, starring Ronald Howard.

LYRIC.—★★★ "The Sound Barrier," aircraft drama, starring Ann Todd, Ralph Richardson, Nigel Patrick. Plus ★★★ "The Ghost Goes West," comedy, starring Robert Donat. (Both re-releases.)

MAYFAIR.—★ "We're Not Married," romantic comedy, starring Ginger Rogers, Paul Douglas. Plus "Stolen Face," drama, starring Lizabeth Scott, Paul Henried.

PARK.—★ "One Minute To Zero," Korean war drama, starring Robert Mitchum, Ann Blyth. Plus "Law of the Badlands," a Tim Holt Western.

PALACE.—★ "King Kong," thriller, starring Robert Armstrong, Fay Wray, Bruce Cabot. Plus "Armored Car Robbery," mystery, starring Charles McGraw, Adele Jergens. (Both re-releases.)

PRINCE EDWARD.—★★★ "The Greatest Show On Earth," technicolor circus drama, starring Betty Hutton, Cornel Wilde, Charlton Heston, Gloria Grahame. Plus featurettes.

REGENT.—★★ "Room For One More," domestic comedy, starring Cary Grant, Betsy Drake. Plus featurettes.

SAVOY.—★★ "Manon," French-language drama, starring Cecile Aubry, Michel Auclair, Serge Regiani. Plus ★★ "Paris 1900," English-language feature narrated by Monty Woolley.

ST. JAMES.—★ "Plymouth Adventure," historical drama, starring Spencer Tracy, Gene Tierney, Van Johnson, Leo Genn. (See review this page.) Plus featurettes.

VARIETY.—★ "My Son John," drama, starring Robert Walker, Van Heflin, Helen Hayes. Plus featurettes.

VICTORY.—★★ "Hunted," thriller, starring Dirk Bogarde, Kay Walsh, Elizabeth Sellars. (See review this page.) Plus ★ "Dance Hall," romantic drama, starring Petula Clark.

Films not yet reviewed

CAPITOL.—"The Spoilers," goldrush melodrama, starring Randolph Scott, Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne. Plus "Six Lessons From Madame La Zonga," comedy, starring Lupe Velez, Leon Errol. (Both re-releases.)

CIVIC.—"Captain Scarlet," period adventure, starring Richard Greene, Leonora Amar. Plus "Without Warning," thriller, starring Adam Williams, Meg Randall.

PLAZA.—"The Big Sky," pioneer Western, starring Kirk Douglas, Elizabeth Threatt. Plus featurettes.

STATE.—"Because Of You," romantic drama, starring Loretta Young, Jeff Chandler. Plus "Bonzo Goes To College," comedy, starring Maureen O'Sullivan, Edmund Gwenn, Bonzo.

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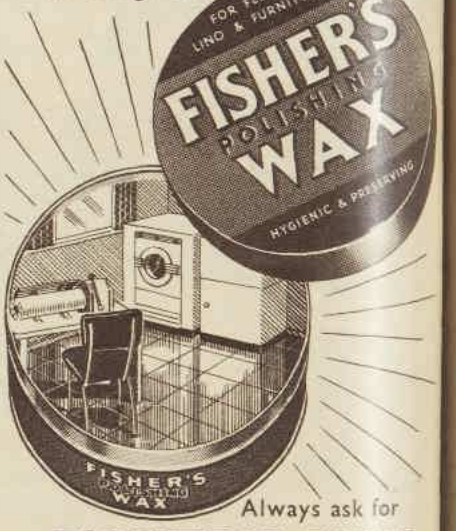

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Australia's Six Best Fish

Theo Roughley, the renowned retired head of New South Wales' Department of Fisheries, says that Australia's six best eating fish are the perch, the John Dory, the Tasmanian trumpeter, the Western Australian jewfish, the Murray cod, and the North Queensland barramundi.

The flesh of all six fish is white and its texture neither moist nor fibrous. All have distinct but not overpowering flavors.

Roughley explains the reasons for his choice in the

Feb. A.M., Now On Sale

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RADIANT COUPLE. Raymon Mainsbridge, of Vaucluse, and his bride, formerly Beverley Coombes, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Coombes, of Vaucluse, after their wedding at St. Canice's, Elizabeth Bay.

OUTSIZE PICTURE HAT shaded Mrs. Lesley Brash's face (right) when she talked to artist Jean Bellette and Mrs. Fred Klement (left) at the Archibald Prize Reject Exhibition of 205 paintings at the Education Galleries.

FIRST NIGHT. Mrs. Tom Bateman and her sister, Dr. Gwen Fitzpatrick, at the opening night of "White Horse Inn" at the Empire. Mrs. Bateman wore a scarlet stole over her frock, and Dr. Fitzpatrick wore blue brocade.

MEMBERS of the Royal Motor Yacht Club, John Green and Diana Arthur, watched the races at Rose Bay on Vice-Commodore's Day. The Vice-Commodore, Mr. T. Albert Field, and Mrs. Field received the guests.

Social Gettings

IN a tropical garden in Kokopo, New Guinea, Gordon Munro, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Munro, of "Keera," Bingara, will marry Helen Lees on March 17.

Gordon is well known for his Aberdeen Angus stud, "Boorooimooka," at Bingara, and his racehorses, particularly Bunny Romance and Macaroma, which won at Armidale last week. Helen, an ex-pupil of Frensham, is the younger daughter of New Guinea coconut planter Mr. Max Lees and Mrs. Lees. The engagement was announced after her return from Europe in the Strathaird.

The wedding and reception will be at the Lees' home. In a whirl of pre-wedding activity, Helen is staying with her future mother-in-law at Vaucluse. Mrs. Munro will give her a party at the Macquarie Club on February 19.

• • •

FORMER water-ballet star Mary-Lee Carberry and countryman Norris Buffier, who were married quietly at Mary Immaculate Church, Manly, are honeymooning on the North Coast. Mary-Lee is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Carberry, of Cronulla, and Norris is the younger son of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Buffier, of St. Marys. They will live at St. Marys.

PIONEER families of Australia and Fiji were united at the wedding of Patricia Caldwell and Peter James Brumby, of Melbourne, at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Suva. Patricia is the youngest daughter of Mr. R. N. Caldwell, retired District Commissioner, Colonial Service. Guests at the wedding included the Governor of Fiji, Sir Thomas Garvey, Sir Hugh Ragg, and Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, who has been a close friend of the Caldwell family for many years. Peter and Patricia will live at Ruakura, New Zealand, where Peter has a scientific research post.

A WONDERFUL trip to the Coronation is being planned by cattle king Roy McCaughey and his wife, who will sail in the Orion on April 11. They will have a grandstand view of the Royal procession from their rooms at the Green Park Hotel, near Piccadilly. Later, they will go to Scotland, Ireland, and the Continent. In Ireland, Mrs. McCaughey will gather more material for her biography of famous sheepbreeder and philanthropist the late Sir Samuel McCaughey. In August Mr. and Mrs. McCaughey will leave for Buenos Aires in the Andes to inspect cattle.

SEVEN pretty girls at a luncheon at the Pickwick Club farewelled Mrs. Alex Ross before she sailed for America with her husband. Hostess was Mrs. Ross' cousin, Diana Field, who wore a grey nylon frock, and the guests were Sheelagh Stevens, Josephine and Jennifer Roche, Margaret Tuttell, Diana Berkman, and Mrs. Nig Walsh. Mr. and Mrs. Ross will stay in America for a year and visit Alex's parents.

FASHION NOTES . . . Edwina Hordern's chiffon evening frock shading from palest blush-pink to a deep rose-pink . . . Mrs. David Klippel's frock of coffee printed silk with enormous revers of starched white organdie, pleated to the waist . . . Jessie Matthews' hat of pale lime green straw swathed in a deeper green velvet ribbon and a red rose.

Anne

FORMER SCOTTISH international Rugby player Peter Laurence Duff (left) and his bride, who was Thelma Elizabeth Kendall, of Wagga, with attendants Joy Donnison, of Sydney, and Ewan Cameron after their wedding at Crown Court Scottish Church, London.

ENGLISH WEDDING. Pat Underwood, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Underwood, of Coogee, and his bride, formerly Rosalind Parsons, of Walton-on-Thames, after their wedding at St. Erconwald's Church, Surrey, England.

OPERA BALL committee president, Mrs. Marcel Dekyvere (standing), and committee members, Mrs. John Bovill, Mrs. Neville Manning, and Mrs. Norman Hill, discuss the Opera Ball to be held at the Town Hall on April 17. Dancers will wear masks and opera costumes at the ball, which will aid N.S.W. National Opera funds.

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The Little

1. Tobacco-beige wool dress is designed on tailored lines with a high turned-up neckline, cleverly cut raglan-like sleeves, and a fitted midriff with a double-buttoned effect. The skirt has a box-pleated front panel.

2. Fath favors jersey for fitted jumper tops. This one, in raspberry-red wool, is shirred softly at the slim waistline and has a cardigan front closing. The skirt, in misty mauve wool, is quite straight with centre and back seams.

3. Maggy Rouff interprets the jumper line in bottle-green wool jersey. The top is cross-draped and swathes to fit snugly over the hips. The neckline is high and the skirt fullness is to the front, flowing from the swathing.

4. Oyster-grey wool makes a slim-fitting sheath with a fly-fastened front. The neckline is a high cowl. Tucked into a black patent belt is a strawberry-and-black plaid wool scarf jutting on the hips and matched to the beret.

5. Gres uses yellow wool jersey for a feminine effect. The shaped front bodice swings round to a graceful bloused back and full sleeves caught at the elbow. The skirt fullness rays out from the front of the bodice top.

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Wool Dress

6. Clever curves distinguish this green wool dress from Carven. The deep bodice yoke and sleeves are cut in one. The neckline is high and jutting, the front fly-buttoned. The skirt has a wide, flaring panel set low at the hipline for front fullness and emphasised in outline with saddle-stitching.

7. Front-buttoning again is featured in this red wool dress which simulates the jumper suit. The cut-out neckline has a crisp white pique dicky, high-collared, and with a black velvet bow. The slim waist is accented with a belt. The full knife-pleated skirt falls from the low and smooth-fitting hipline.

8. Blue wool tweed is used for a tailored effect. The neckline is a low-cut square filled with a deeper blue jersey cowl scarf to match the draped jersey hat and stole lining. The slim, cuffed sleeves have a button closing.

9. Fath does this jumper dress in cafe au lait wool. The top plays up the long-torso look with slim hips and soft shoulder-line. The neckline is a deep cowl draped low across the bosom. The skirt has box pleats all round.

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Residents of Lidcombe, N.S.W., praise the fast-killing action of Mortein Plus:

NON-STAINING
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"Mortein Plus is really marvellous. It's the best spray I have ever used. It's the only spray that kills Argentine Ants. We are very happy with it."

Mrs. K. Osborne, 18 Mary Street, Lidcombe, N.S.W.:

"It is the only spray I have found that kills Argentine Ants. I experimented with everything before I tried Mortein Plus, now I wouldn't use anything else. It is really marvellous—since I commenced using it I haven't had one Argentine Ant in my house."

New, powerful activated Mortein Plus—the fastest killing insect spray known to science—kills Argentine Ants—and all other ants—stone dead! Their destructive menace to home and property can be STOPPED this speedy, effective way.

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Anything suds can do TRIX can do better.

Rene Suggests

This feature will appear weekly during Betty Keep's temporary absence.

The panties I have illustrated this week are a particularly comfortable design to wear, and have a smooth line under frocks. Make your pattern from the directions below.

TWO VERSIONS of the panties which you can make using the diagram and directions on this page as a guide. They may be finished either with satin bindings or with lace.

YOU will need either a yard or a yard and a quarter of material according to your size. You will be able to judge the amount after you have made the pattern from the illustrated graph.

Cut your pattern using the diagram on this page. Take a piece of plain paper 32in. x 20in.

For 28in. waist, 40in. hips, rule it in 4in. squares as shown.

For 26in. waist, 38in. hips, rule it in 3¾in. squares.

For 24in. waist, 36in. hips, rule it in 3½in. squares.

Cut out the pattern and lay it on the two thicknesses of material, noting where straight of material is marked on diagram.

Cut out the garment. The inner lines are seam lines.

To make up

JOIN the backs, then the fronts, using French seams. Seam the cut-out dart on the right hip. Make a placket on the left hip. Join the small under-seam.

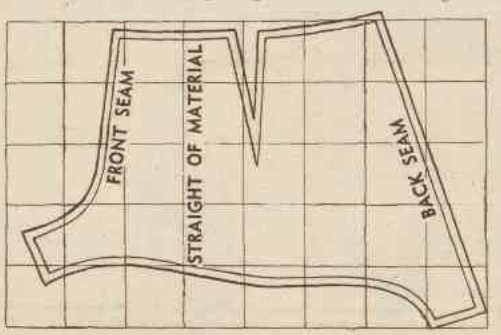
You can finish the waist and the legs with a fine binding. Satin is a pretty binding for a dull-surfaced material.

If using lace as trimming, tack it on so that the lace edge is along the bottom edge of the material. After sewing on the lace, cut the surplus material away from underneath.

Here is a useful tip for sewing on lace with a straight edge: Machine it on first, then cut away the surplus material at the back, leaving an eighth of an inch. Whip the raw edge by hand. This makes a firm, strong finish.

This method is satisfactory only on good, non-fraying materials, such as chiffon, crepe-de-chine, and satin. On materials which fray quickly it is better to use bindings.

If your material is nylon be sure to use nylon thread for stitching and have the tension on the machine very loose. Otherwise, the seams will pucker.



***PATTERN** at left for panties. Four-inch squares are used for a 28in. waist. For other waist measurements see directions on this page.*

★ As I read the stars ★

By EVE HILLIARD

ARIES (March 21-April 20): Just a quiet little joke you may enjoy all by yourself, February 21, but it lightens any load you may be carrying. Refrain from risky ventures on February 23.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20): Appointments made on February 17 are under favorable influences. If concerned with a budding romance, February 18 may have a surprise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): February 17 promises developments in social or business affairs. Be wary in committing yourself, February 21, when silence is your best bet.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): Either in body or in mind you are likely to travel far, February 18. Holidays, short journeys, week-end outings are in the boom. February 23 for new plans.

LEO (July 23-August 22): Be careful in traffic; look both ways before taking action in regard to any proposition, February 20. Lady Luck might pay you a visit on February 23.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): A dream come true or a wish fulfilled could make February 19 something righ. out of the box. February 20 could bring the climax in a personal matter.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Whatever routine fills your days in office, factory, or home, it is apt to undergo changes; February 17 and 18 are much to your satisfaction. February 21 for recreation.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): Good fortune through the opposite sex in a personal, social, or financial affair is probable, February 17. The problems of February 19 will be solved on February 22.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 20): For many of you February 19 holds fascinating possibilities at home. February 23 completes a project and brings a personal triumph.

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19): Why stay put when the open road beckons? Overcome habit or inertia on February 18 and gain new horizons. February 19 will start a new and exciting phase.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 19): Maybe you think it's going to cost too much or you're worried over your budget. February 19 may provide a brain wave, a fresh asset, or a new scheme.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): Come to the centre of the stage and take a bow. New interests, a new friendship, perhaps a little more money, are in the offing from February 17. Watch the 22nd.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatsoever for the statements contained in it.]

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Continuing . . . . **The Grand Sophy**

from page 5

with her luxuriant black covered only by a mantilla, draped over a high comb. was extremely handsome, with large, sleepy brown eyes, and a creamy complexion, delicately tinted by the hand of an artist. She was little more than forty-five, but her plumpness made her appear to be older. She did not look in the least like a widow, which was the first thought that occurred to Lady Ombersley when she presently entered the room, and took the proffered hand held out to her.

"Cum' esta?" the Marquesa said, in her rich, lazy voice.

This terrified Hubert, who had been assured that she spoke excellent English. He cast a reproaching look of reproach at Sophy, who at once intervened, calling her future stepmother to order.

The Marquesa smiled placidly, and said: "De seguro! I speak French and English, and both very well. It is a profound happiness to meet the sister of Sir Horace, though you do not, I find, resemble him, senora. Valgame! Are these then all your sons and daughters?"

Lady Ombersley made haste to reassure her, and to perform the necessary introductions. The Marquesa lost interest in these after very long, but smiled in a general way upon her guests, and begged them all to sit down.

After some fitful conversation, once fell, the Marquesa lying back against the cushions in the corner of the sofa, and Lady Ombersley wondering what topic of conversation would interest this lethargic lady. It was left to Miss Wraxton, with her fine social sense, to fill the breach, which she did by telling the Marquesa that she was a great admirer of Don Quixote."

"All the English are," replied the Marquesa. "And they will none of them say that I am correctly. We have also Quevedo, and Espinel, and Cervantes, to name only a few. In poetry, too——"

"El Fenix de Espana," interpolated Mr. Fawnhope, suddenly.

The Marquesa looked approvingly at him. "Sophy," she said, breaking into her own tongue, "this young man with the face of an angel reads Spanish."

"Very indifferently," said Mr. Fawnhope, quite unmoved by this embarrassing description of his face.

"We will talk together," said the Marquesa.

"Certainly not," said Sophy firmly. "At least, not if you mean to do so in Spanish."

Fortunately for the success of the party, Gaston came in at this moment to announce that refreshments were laid out in the dining-room. It was then discovered that however ardent a hostess the Marquesa might be her maitre d'hotel left nothing to chance.

A profusion of succulent foreign dishes awaited the guests, garnished with aspic, or spread with subtle sauce, and served with various light wines. Jellies, trifles, syllabubs, puppets of fruit, and coffee creams, cups of almond paste rounded off what the Marquesa called a light marienda.

From the sparing way in which Miss Wraxton partook of a few of the delicacies it was not difficult to see that she considered such lavish hospitality vulgar; but Hubert, making a hearty meal, began to think the Marquesa a very good sort of woman after all.

The repast at an end, Gaston bent to his mistress' ear, and reminded her that the gate into the wood had been unlocked. She said: "Ah, yes! The bluebell wood! So pretty! These young people would like to wander through it, senora, while you and I repose ourselves a little."

It would never have occurred to Lady Ombersley to suggest a siesta to a visitor, but since she invariably dozed during the afternoon she had no real fault to find with this programme, and accompanied the Marquesa into the drawing-room.

Outside, Mr. Rivenhall went off towards the stables while the other four made their way, through the shrubbery, towards the bluebell wood, Mr. Fawnhope having been visited by inspiration which only the sight of Cecilia in the wood could, he said, bring to fruition. So far, he had only achieved one line of his poem, but he felt it to be promising. "When amidst bluebells my Cecilia treads," he murmured.

"Quite Carolinian!" remarked Miss Wraxton.

Mr. Fawnhope's verse was at all times derivative, but he liked being told so no better than any other poet, so he took his Cecilia's hand, and would have led her away had not Miss Wraxton been on the alert to prevent just such a happening. With determination she stayed beside the lovers, and presently, by a happy reference to Cowper, succeeded in diverting Mr. Fawnhope's attention from Cecilia to herself.

Sir Vincent, finding solace for boredom in amusement at this situation, bided his time, and was presently rewarded. Cecilia, unable to bear a part in the elevated discussion in progress, began to drop behind. Sir Vincent fell in beside her, and in a very short space of time coaxed her out of her crossness, and, indeed, out of the wood as well, to inspect and dovecot.

Having inspected it, since he was skilled in the art of flirtation, and she was lovely enough to make a little dalliance a pleasant way of whiling away a dull afternoon, they contrived to pass an agreeable hour together.

While all this was going on, Sophy was walking in the shrubbery with Hubert. She had not failed to notice that during the past few days he had swung between exaggeratedly high spirits and fits of black depression. She thought she was now on good enough terms with him to venture to broach the matter to him, and so, it seemed, she was, for after only a little hesitation, he confessed he was a trifle worried.

But it was no great matter, he added, and he expected to have put it all behind him in a very few days' time.

Sophy, who had led the way to a rustic seat, now obliged him to sit down beside her on it. Tracing a pattern on the gravel path with the point of her parasol, she said: "If it is money—and it nearly always is: it is the most odious thing! —and you do not care to ask your papa for it, I expect I could help you."

"Devilish good of you, Sophy," he replied. "But I haven't yet come to borrowing from females. Besides, there's no need. I shall come about, and before I go up to Oxford again."

"How?"

"Never mind, but it can't fail! If it does—but it will not! I may have a father who—well, no sense in talking of him! And I may have a dashed disagreeable brother, holding so tightly to the purse-strings that you'd think he was a Jew, but fortunately for me I've a couple of good friends—whatever Charles may say!"

"Oh!" said Sophy, digesting this information. Disagreeable Charles might be, but she was shrewd enough to suspect that if he condemned any of Hubert's friends there might be much to be said in his defence.

"Anyway," Hubert went on cheerfully, "it doesn't signify! I shall be as merry as a grig in a week's time, and I don't mean to get into a fix again, I can tell you!"

She was obliged to be satisfied with this assurance, for he would say no more. After taking another turn round the shrubbery, she left him, and went back to the house.

She found Mr. Rivenhall seated under the elm tree on the south lawn, with Tina, who was sleeping off a large repast, at his feet. He made room for her to sit down beside him.

"If you want to see a rare picture, Sophy," he said, "peep in at the drawing-room window! My mother is sound asleep on one sofa, and the Marquesa on another."

She laughed, then saw that his attention had become fixed on Cecilia and Sir Vincent, who had that instant come round a corner of the clipped yew hedge.

A slight frown descended on to his brow, which made Sophy say severely: "Now, don't take one of your pets because Cecy flirts a little with Sir Vincent! You should be thankful to see her taking interest in some other man than Mr. Fawnhope. But there is no pleasing you!"

"I am certainly not pleased with that connection!"

"Oh, you have no cause to feel alarm! Sir Vincent is only interested in heiresses, and has no intention of offering for Cecy."

"Thank you, it is not on that score that I feel alarm," he answered.

She could say no more, for by this time the other couple had come up to them. They were soon joined by Hubert. He shot Sophy a glance so pregnant with mischief that he looked more like a schoolboy than the town-beau he fancied himself.

She could not imagine what mischief he could have found to perform in the little time since she had left him, but before she could speculate very seriously on this problem her attention was diverted by the Marquesa, who appeared at the drawing-room window, and made signs indicative of her desire that they should all come into the house.

They found the Marquesa so much refreshed by her nap as to have become quite animated. It now being at least two hours since the light marienda had been consumed, she stood in urgent need of further sustenance, and warmly invited her guests to partake of tea and angel cakes. It was then that Lady Ombersley became aware of the absence of Miss Wraxton and Mr. Fawnhope from the gathering, and demanded to know where they were.

Cecilia replied, with a shrug, that they were no doubt quoting poetry to each other in the wood; but when twenty minutes passed without their putting in an appearance not only Lady Ombersley, but her elder son also, became a trifle restive. Then it was that Sophy remembered Hubert's look of mischief.

She glanced across at him, and saw that his expression was so unconcerned as to be wholly incredible. In deep foreboding she made an excuse to change her seat to one beside his, and whispered, under cover of the general conversation: "You dreadful creature, what have you done?"

"Locked them into the wood!" he whispered in return. "That will teach her to play propriety!"

She had to bite back a laugh, but managed to say with suitable severity: "It will not do! If you have the key, give it to me so that no one will observe you!"

He said: "What a spoil-sport you are!" but soon found an opportunity to drop it into her lap, for although it had seemed, at the time, a splendid idea to lock the gate into the wood, he had been realising for some minutes that to release the imprisoned couple without scandal might prove to be rather more difficult.

"It is so unlike dear Eugenia!" said Lady Ombersley. "I cannot think what they can be about!"

"It is not difficult to imagine!" remarked the Mar-

To page 32

Expert's favorite fish

WHICH six fish do you enjoy eating most?

Theo Roughley, who retired last year as Superintendent of Fisheries in New South Wales, lists these as his favorites for eating:

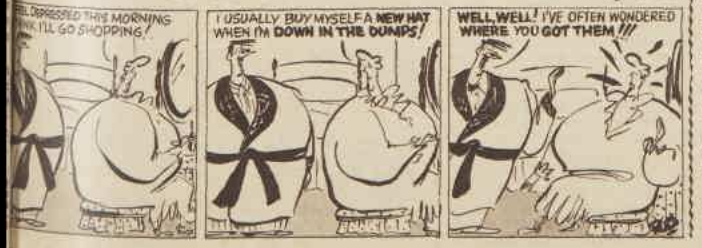
Pearl perch, which comes from northern N.S.W. and southern Queensland; the larger but otherwise almost indistinguishable Western Australian jewfish; John dory, from all States except Western Australia and Queensland; North Queensland barramundi, which grows to more than 100lb.; the Murray cod, of similar weight; and the Tasmanian trumpeter.

"These six fish all have beautifully white flesh, tender texture, delicate flavor, and are neither dry nor excessively oily," Roughley says. "Moreover, they are not too bony."

You can read more of Mr. Roughley's reasons for choosing them above such favorites as whiting, flounder, bream, and snapper in A.M. for February, now on sale.

IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY

By RUD



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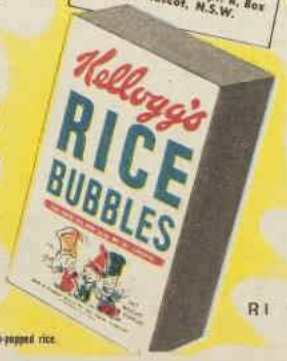

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R1

Continuing . . . .

The Grand Sophy

from page 31

quesa, rather amused. "So beautiful a young man and so romantic a scene!"

"I will go and look for them," said Mr. Rivenhall, getting up, and walking out of the room.

Hubert began to look a little alarmed, but Sophy exclaimed suddenly: "I wonder if one of the gardeners can have locked the gate again, thinking that we had all left the wood? Excuse me, Sancia!"

She overtook Mr. Rivenhall in the shrubbery, and called out: "So stupid! Sancia, you know, lives in dread of robbers and has trained all her servants never to leave a gate or a door unlocked! One of the gardeners, supposing us all to have gone back to the house, locked the gate into the wood. Gaston had the key: here it is!"

A bend in the gravel walk brought the gates into the wood within view. Miss Wraxton was standing by them, and it was plain to the meanest intelligence that she was in no very amiable humor. Behind her, seated upon a bank, and absorbed in metrical composition, was Mr. Fawnhope, to all appearances divorced from the world.

As Mr. Rivenhall fitted the key into the lock, Sophy said: "I am so sorry! It is all the fault of Sancia's absurd terrors! Are you very bored and chilled, Miss Wraxton?"

Miss Wraxton had endured a trying half-hour. Upon finding herself shut into the wood, she had first asked Mr. Fawnhope if he could not climb over the fence, and when he had replied, quite simply, that he could not, she had requested him to shout.

But the ode that was burgeoning in his head had by this time taken possession of him, and he had said that the sylvan setting was just the inspiration he needed. After that, he sat down on the bank, and drew out his notebook and a pencil, and whenever she begged him to bestir himself to procure her release, all he said was: "Hush!"

Consequently she was in a mood ripe for murder when the rescue party at last arrived on the scene, and was betrayed into an unwise accusation, "You did this!" she flung at Sophy, quite white with anger.

Sophy, who felt sorry for her being discovered in so ridiculous a situation, replied soothingly: "No, it was a foolish servant, who thought we had all gone back to the house. Never mind! Come and drink some of Sancia's excellent tea!"

"I don't believe you! You are unprincipled, and vulgar, and——"

"Eugenia!" said Mr. Rivenhall sharply.

She gave an angry sob, but said no more. Sophy went into the wood to rouse Mr. Fawnhope from his abstraction, and Mr. Rivenhall said: "It was nothing but an accident, and there is no need to be so put-out."

"I am persuaded your cousin did it to make me a laughing-stock," she said in a low voice. "I cannot believe that any of the servants were responsible."

"You would do better to pretend to believe it, however."

"Then you do not think so either!" she exclaimed.

"No, I think Hubert did it," he replied coolly. "And if I am right, you have my cousin to thank for speedily releasing you."

"Hubert!" she cried. "Why should he do such an ungentlemanly thing, pray?"

He shrugged. "Possibly for a jest, possibly because he resented your interference in Cecilia's affairs, my dear Eugenia. He is much attached to his sister."

She said in a deeply mortified tone: "If that is so, I hope you mean to take him to task!"

"I shall do nothing so ill-judged," responded Mr. Rivenhall, at his most blighting.

Shortly after this not entirely successful day in the country, Mr. Rivenhall announced his intention of going down to Ombersley for a spell.

His mother had no objection to advance, but realising that the dread moment of disclosure had now come, said, with an assumption of calm she was far from feeling, that she hoped he would come back to London in time to attend Sophy's party.

"Is it so important?" he asked. "I have no turn for dancing, Mama, and such an evening as you will no doubt pass is of all things the most insipid!"

"Well, it is rather important," she confessed. "It would be thought strange if you were absent, dear Charles!"

"Good heavens, Mama, I have been absent from all such affairs in this house!"

"As a matter of fact, this party is to be a little larger than we first thought it would be!" she said desperately.

He bent one of his disconcerting stares upon her. "Indeed! I had collected that some twenty persons were to be invited?"

"There—there will be a few more than that!" she said.

"How many more?"

She became intent on disentangling the fringe of her shawl from the arm of her chair. "Well, we thought perhaps it would be best—since it is our first party for your cousin, and your uncle particularly desired me to launch her upon society—to give a set ball, Charles! And your father promises to bring the Duke of York to it."

"How many persons, ma'am, have you invited to this precious ball?" demanded Mr. Rivenhall, ungratified.

"Not—not above four hundred!" faltered his guilty parent. "And they will not all of them come, dear Charles!"

"Four hundred!" he ejaculated. "I need not ask whose doing this is! And who, ma'am, is to foot the bill for this entertainment?"

"Sophy—that is to say, your uncle, of course! I assure you the cost is not to come upon you!"

He was not in the least soothed by this, but, on the contrary, rapped out: "Do you imagine I will permit that wretched girl to pay for parties in this house? If you have been mad enough, ma'am, to consent to this scheme——"

Lady Ombersley prudently sought refuge in tears, and began to grope for her smelling-salts. Her son eyed her in a baffled way, and said with painstaking restraint: "Pray do not cry, Mama! I am well aware whom I have to thank for this."

An interruption, welcome to Lady Ombersley, occurred in the shape of Selina, who bounced into the room, exclaiming: "Oh, Mama! Why we gave the ball for Cecilia did we——" She then perceived her eldest brother, and broke off short, looking extremely conscious.

"Go on!" said Mr. Rivenhall grimly.

Selina gave her head a slight toss. "I suppose you know all about Sophy's ball, well, I am sure I don't care for you cannot stop it now for all the cards of invitation have gone out, and three hundred and eighty seven persons have accepted!"

She turned back defiantly to her mother. "Mama, Sophy says that when she and Sir Horace held a great reception in Vienna, Sir Horace were the police officers of it, and that they were able to keep the street clear, and tell the coachmen where to go, and so on. Did we not do the same at Cecilia's ball?"

"Yes, and the link-boys as well," replied Lady Ombersley, emerging briefly from her handkerchief, but retiring to its protection again immediately.

"Yes, Mama, and the champagne!" said Selina, determined to discharge the whole of her errand. "Should it be ordered from Gunter's, with the rest? Or——"

"You may inform your cousin," interrupted Mr. Rivenhall, "that the champagne will be provided from our own cellars!" He then turned his shoulder on his young sister and demanded of his parent: "How does it come about that Eugenia has not mentioned this affair to me? Has she not been invited to your ball?"

One desperately inquiring eye emerged from the handkerchief, wildly seeking enlightenment of Selina.

"Good gracious, Charles," said that damsel, shocked. "Can you have forgotten the bereavement in Miss Wraxton's family? I am sure if she has told us once she has told us a dozen times that propriety forbids her to attend any but the most quiet parties!"

"This, too, is my cousin's work, I collect!" he said, his lips tightening. "I must say, ma'am, I might have expected if you were bent on this folly that you would have sent a card to my promised wife!"

"Of course, Charles!" said Lady Ombersley. "If it had

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FOR THE CHILDREN

Wuff, Snuff & Tuff — By TIM

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4381668

Continuing . . . .

The Grand Sophy

from page 32

been done, it is a foolish over-sight! Though it is perfectly true that Eugenia has told us that while she is in black gloves——"

"Oh, Mama, don't!" cried Selina impetuously. "You know she will cast a damper over everything, with that long face of hers, just like a horse——"

"How dare you?" interrupted Mr. Rivenhall furiously.

Selina looked a little frightened, but muttered: "Well, she does, whatever you may choose to think, Charles!"

"More of my cousin's work, no doubt!"

Selina flushed, and cast down her eyes. Mr. Rivenhall turned to his mother. "Be so good as to tell me, ma'am, in what manner this affair is arranged between you and Sophy! Does she give you a draft on my uncle's bank, or what?"

"I—I don't precisely know!" said Lady Ombersley. "I mean, it has not been discussed yet! Indeed, Charles, I did not know myself until just the other day that so many people had been invited!"

"Well, I know, Mama!" said Selina. "The bills are all sent to Sophy, and you will not be troubled with them at all!"

"I thank you!" Charles said, and walked abruptly out of the room.

He found his cousin in the small saloon at the back of the house which was generally known as the Young Ladies' Room. She was engaged in compiling some kind of a list, but she looked up at the opening of the door, and smiled at Charles.

"Are you looking for Cecilia? She has gone out to do some shopping in Bond Street, with Miss Adderbury."

"No, I am not looking for Cecilia!" he answered. "My business is with you, cousin, and will not take me long. I am informed that my mother is giving a ball in your honor on Tuesday, and by some extraordinary piece of mismanagement the bills for this have been sent to you. Will you be so obliging as to find them, and give them to me?"

"On your high ropes again, Charles?" she said, lifting her brows. "This is Sir Horace's ball, not my aunt's: there is no mismanagement."

"Sir Horace may be master in his own house—though that I doubt!—but he is not master in this one! If my mother chooses to hold a ball, she may do so, but in no circumstances will the charge fall upon my uncle. It is intolerable that you should have persuaded my mother to consent to such a scheme! Give me what bills you have, if you please!"

"But I do not please," replied Sophy. "Neither Sir Horace nor you, dear cousin, is the master in this house. I have my Uncle Ombersley's consent to what I have done."

She saw with satisfaction that she had utterly taken him aback, and added: "If I were you, Charles, I would go for a nice walk in the park. I have always found that there is nothing so beneficial to the temper as exercise in the fresh air."

He controlled himself with a strong effort. "Cousin, I am in earnest! I cannot and I will not tolerate such a situation as this!"

"But no one has asked you to tolerate anything at all," she pointed out. "If my uncle and aunt are satisfied with my arrangements, pray what have you to say to them?"

He said through shut teeth: "I think I told you once before, cousin, that we did very well here before you came to upset all our comfort!"

"Yes, you did, and what you meant, Charles, was that until I came no one dared to flout you. You should be grateful to me—or at any rate, Miss Wraxton should, for I am sure you would have made an odious husband before I came to stay with your Mama."

This put him in mind of a complaint he could with justice make. He said stiffly: "Since you have brought up Miss Wraxton's name, I shall be much obliged to you, cousin, if you will refrain from telling my sisters that she has a face like a horse!"

"But, Charles, no blame attaches to Miss Wraxton! She cannot help it, and that, I assure you, I have always pointed out to your sisters!"

"I consider Miss Wraxton's countenance particularly well-bred!"

"Yes, indeed, but you have quite misunderstood the matter! I meant a particularly well-bred horse!"

"You meant, as I am perfectly aware, to belittle Miss Wraxton!"

"No, no! I am very fond of horses!" Sophy said earnestly.

Before he could stop himself he *found* that he was replying to this. "Selina, who repeated the remark to me, is not fond of horses, however, and she——" He broke off, seeing how absurd it was to argue on such a head.

"I expect she will be, when she has lived in the same house with Miss Wraxton for a month or two," said Sophy encouragingly.

Mr. Rivenhall, restraining an impulse to box his cousin's ears, flung out of the room, slamming the door behind him. At the foot of the stairs he encountered Lord Bromford, who was handing his hat and overcoat to a footman.

Mr. Rivenhall, seeing how he might, in some measure, be revenged on Sophy, greeted him with great affability, asked him if he meant to attend Tuesday's ball, and, upon hearing that his lordship was much looking forward to the engagement, said: "Have you come to bespeak my cousin's hand for the cotillion? You are wise! She will certainly be beseiged with solicitations! Dassett, you will find Miss Stanton-Lacy in the Yellow Saloon! Take his lordship up to her!"

Lord Bromford followed the butler upstairs to the drawing-room, Dassett having his own views on the impropriety of ushering single gentlemen into the Young Ladies' Room.

When Sophy, duly chaperoned by Selina, joined him there, he lost no time in begging her to dance the cotillion with him. Sophy, trusting that one of her Peninsular friends would come to her rescue, said how sorry she was to be obliged to refuse him. She was, she said, already engaged.

His face fell, and he looked even a little offended, exclaiming: "How can this be, when your cousin told me to make haste to be first with you?"

"My cousin Charles? Did he indeed?" said Sophy appreciatively. "Well, no doubt he did not know that my hand has been claimed these past three days. Perhaps we may stand up together for one of the country dances."

He bowed, but further conversation was prevented by the arrival of Mr. Wychbold, who came to escort Sophy and her cousins to witness a wild beast show.

. . . . .

It was plain from the outset that the ball was to be one of the season's successes. Even the weather favored it. From dawn till dinner-time Ombersley House was the scene of restless activity, and the road outside noisy with the wheels of tradesmen's carts, and the whistling of innumerable errand-boys.

Mr. Rivenhall arrived from the country just as two men in shirt-sleeves and leather breeches were erecting an awning across the flag-way to the road; and another, wearing a baize apron, laying a red carpet down the steps, under Dassett's lofty supervision.

Dassett informed him, with satisfaction, that they would sit down thirty to dinner at eight o'clock.

He added, with unusual warmth, "Miss Sophy, I venture to say, is a lady as knows precisely how things should be done. A great pleasure, if I may be pardoned the liberty, to work for Miss Sophy, for she thinks of everything, and I fancy there will no hitch to mar the festivities."

Mr. Rivenhall grunted, and went off to his own apartments. When he next appeared, it was to join the rest of his family in the drawing-room a few minutes only before eight o'clock. His two youngest sisters, who were deriving much entertainment from hanging over the banisters of the staircase leading to the schoolroom floor, informed him in penetrating whispers that he looked so smart they could not believed that there would be any other gentleman to rival him.

He looked up, laughing, but their whole-hearted admiration softened his mood, and after promising faithfully to send a servant up to the schoolroom with ices later on, he went on to the drawing-room and was even able to bring himself to compliment his sister and cousin on their gowns.

Sophy had chosen a dress of her favorite pomona-green crepe, which she wore over a slip of white satin. It had tiny puff-sleeves of lace and seed-pearls, and was lavishily trimmed with lace. Cecilia was a dream princess in white spider-gauze, which glinted when she moved. Her curls, with only a silver ribbon threaded through them, were like spun gold; her eyes a clear, translucent blue; her mouth a perfect bow.

Miss Wraxton, after prolonged consideration, had decided to attend Sophy's ball, gaining her Mama's consent by assuring her that she should certainly not take part in any dancing.

She was the first of the dinner guests to arrive, and was attended by her brother Alfred.

She was attired in discreet lavender crepe, and had come determined to please, and to be pleased. She complimented the cousins on their appearance, and her remarks won a warm look from Charles.

At the first opportunity, he engaged her attention, going over to put a chair for her, and saying: "I had not dared to hope that you would be present to-night. Thank you!"

She smiled and pressed his hand slightly. "Mama did not quite like it, but she agreed that it would be proper for me to come, in the circumstances. I shall not dance, I need hardly say."

"I am delighted to hear it: you present me with a capital excuse for following your example!"

She looked gratified, but said: "No, no, your are to do your duty, Charles! I insist upon it!"

More guests were arriving; Mr. Rivenhall moved away to assist his parents in receiving them; the big double drawing-room began to fill up; and at only a few minutes past eight o'clock Dassett was able to announce dinner.

It might have been expected, since all the arrangements for the party had been Sophy's, that she would have put herself forward more than was becoming, but so far from doing so she seemed to be in a retiring mood, bearing no part in greeting guests upstairs, and confining her conversation at table, most correctly, to the gentlemen on her either side.

Miss Wraxton, who had labelled her a hoyden, was obliged to own that her company manners at least were above reproach.

The ball, which began at ten o'clock, was held in the huge room built for the purpose at the back of the house. It was lit by hundreds of candles in a great crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Masses of flowers were arranged in set pieces at either end of the room, and an excellent orchestra had been engaged, quite regardless (Mr. Rivenhall bitterly reflected) of expense.

The room, large as it was, soon become so crowded with elegant persons that it seemed certain that the function would receive the final accolade, in being voted a sad crush. No hostess could desire more.

The ball opened with a country dance, in which Mr. Rivenhall, in honor bound, stood up with his cousin. He performed his part with propriety, she hers with grace; and Miss Wraxton, watching from a rout-chair at one side of the room, smiled graciously upon them both.

Mr. Fawnhope, a most beautiful dancer, had led Cecilia into the same set, a circumstance that considerably annoyed Mr. Rivenhall. Nowhere did Mr. Fawnhope shine to more advantage than in a ballroom, and envious eyes followed Cecilia.

Lord Bromfield, one of the earliest arrivals, failed, owing to Mr. Rivenhall's sense of duty, to secure Sophy's hand for the first dance, and as a waltz followed the country dance it was some time before he was able to stand up with her.

While waltzing was in progress he stood watching the performers, and in due course gravitated to Miss Wraxton's side, and entertained her with

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All characters in the serials and short stories which appear in The Australian Women's Weekly are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.

Beauty in brief:

"Cottontail" cut

By CAROLYN EARLE

The "Cottontail" is a variation of the horse-tail hair-style that has caught the fancy of young Americans.

THE new idea involves arranging curled hair-ends so that they spin into a bunch on the back of the head midway between the crown and nape.

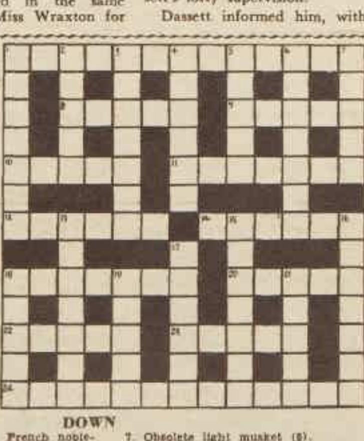
Curls may be decorated with ribbon or glitter at night. The style is supposed to resemble the pompon tailpiece of the rabbit, after which it is named.

A front bang arrangement, combined with short, brushed-up side lengths, can be varied as the wearer requires.

Allowing intentionally casual curls to fall over the forehead in a full or half bang is an excellent way of camouflaging an irregular hairline or hiding a cowlick.

Straight or waved bangs also solve the problem of a too-high forehead.

THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. In this game the [illegible] cannot see his [illegible] (3, 4, 4).
8. You find a French [illegible] in these [illegible] (5).
9. [illegible] are Roman (6).
10. These [illegible] are produced by 9 across (7).
11. [illegible] in theatre between pit and stage (7).
12. Push with force which ends in rust (5).
14. Individual through [illegible] descendant (6).
18. In Leningrad they may use it for tying up parcels? (3, 4).
20. His eyes were put on the tail of a peacock but can be used as raw material for sugar? (5).
22. Mother - of - pearl four fifths of which is 4840 square yards (5).
23. The Devil (6).
24. Metallic term for connubial bliss (4, 7).

Solution to last week's crossword.

Solution will be published next week.

DOWN

1. Noble man and the French nobleman (7).
2. I see tea, you and me in metrical stress (5).
3. Deep dells (7).
4. Make hostile attack as piece of canvas (6).
5. Despatches the finish in steamer (5).
6. Use ants (anagr. 7).
7. Obsolete light musket (5).
13. Essential in car dial (7).
15. Praised with Alex and Ted (7).
16. Ten gins (anagr. 7).
17. Children like to play on episcopal unit and old maxim (6).
18. Tears the end in the middle (5).
19. A tree can make a sharp ascending ridge of a mountain (5).
21. Supernatural beings (5).

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The Grand Sophy

Continuing . . . . *from page 33*

an exposition of his views on the waltz.

It was half-way through the evening when Sophy, breathless from an energetic waltz with Mr. Wychbold, was standing at the side of the room, fanning herself, and watching the couples still circling round the floor while her partner went to procure a glass of iced lemonade for her, was suddenly accosted by a pleasant-looking gentleman.

"My friend, Major Quinton, promised that he would present me to the Grand Sophy," he said with a smile, "but the wretched fellow goes from one set to the next, and never spares me a thought! How do you do, Miss Stanton-Lacy? You will forgive by informality, won't you? It is true that I have no business here, for I was not invited, but Charles assures me that had I not been believed to be still laid upon a bed of sickness I must have received a card."

She looked at him in that frank way of hers, summing him up. She liked what she saw. He was a man in the early thirties, not precisely handsome, but with a pleasing countenance redeemed from the commonplace by a pair of humorous grey eyes. He was above the medium height, and had a good pair of shoulders, and an excellent leg for a riding-boot.

"It is certainly too bad of Major Quinton," Sophy said smilingly. "But you know what a rattle-pate he is! Ought we to have sent you a card? You must forgive us! I hope your illness was not of a serious nature?"

"Alas, merely painful and humiliating!" he replied. "Would you believe that a man of my age could fall a victim to so childish a complaint, ma'am?—Mumps!"

Sophy dropped her fan, exclaiming: "What did you say? Mumps?"

"Mumps," he repeated, picking up the fan, and giving it back to her. "I do not wonder at your astonishment!"

"Then you," said Sophy, "are Lord Charlbury!"

He bowed. "I am, and I perceive that my fame has gone before me. I own, I should not have chosen to figure in your mind as the man with mumps, but so, I see, it is!"

"Let us sit down," said Sophy.

He looked amused, but accompanied her at once to a sofa against the wall. "By all means! But may I not get you a glass of lemonade?"

"Mr. Wychbold—I expect you are acquainted with him—has already gone to do so. I should like to talk to you for a little while, for I have heard a great deal about you, you know."

"Nothing could please me more, for I have heard a great deal about you, ma'am, and it has inspired me with the liveliest desire to meet you!"

"I cannot conceive," said Sophy, with strong feeling, "what can have possessed you, sir, to contract mumps at such a moment! Nothing could have been more ill-judged!"

"It was not done by design," said his lordship meekly.

Mr. Wychbold came up just then with Sophy's lemonade. "Hello, Everard!" he said. "I didn't know you were fit to be seen yet! How are you, dear boy?"

"Bruised in spirit! My sufferings under the complaint that struck me down were as nothing to what I now undergo. Shall I ever live it down? Or must I go and rusticate?"

"On no account!" said Sophy decidedly. She waited until Mr. Wychbold's attention was claimed by a lady in puce satin, and then turned towards her companion, and said forthrightly: "Are you a very good dancer, sir?"

"Not, I fancy, above the average, ma'am. Certainly not to compare with the exquisite young man we are both watching."

"In that case," said Sophy, "I would not, if I were you, solicit Cecilia to waltz!"

"I have already done so, but your warning is unnecessary: she is engaged for every waltz, and also the quadrille. The most I can hope for is to stand up with her in a country dance."

"Don't do it!" Sophy advised him. "To be trying to talk to anyone when you should be attending to the figure is always fatal, believe me!"

He turned his head, and gave her back a look as frank as her own. "Miss Stanton-Lacy, you are plainly aware of my circumstances. Will you tell me in what case I stand, and who is the Adonis at present monopolising Miss Rivenhall?"

"He is Augustus Fawnhope, and he is a poet."

"That has an ominous ring," he said lightly. "I know the family, of course, but I think I have not previously encountered this sprig."

"Very likely you might not, for he was used to be with Sir Charles Sturt, in Brussels. Lord Charlbury, you look to me like a sensible man!"

"I had rather I had a head like a Greek coin," he remarked ruefully.

"You must understand," said Sophy, disregarding this frivolity, "that half the young ladies in London are in love with Mr. Fawnhope."

"I can readily believe it, and I grudge him only one of his conquests."

As Sophy was about to reply, they were interrupted. Lord Ombersley, who had gone away after dinner, now reappeared, accompanied by an elderly and immensely corpulent man in whom no one had the least difficulty in recognising a member of the Royal Family. He was, in fact, the Duke of York, that one of Farmer George's sons who most nearly resembled him.

He had the same protuberant blue eye, and beaky nose, the same puffy cheeks, and pouting mouth, but he was plainly a genial prince, ready to be pleased, standing on very little ceremony, and chatting affably to anyone who was presented to him.

Both Cecilia and Sophy had this honor. His Royal Highness' appreciation of Cecilia's beauty was quite broadly expressed. He talked very jovially to Sophy, asked her how her father did, and opined, with a loud laugh, that by this time Sir Horace was enjoying himself among all the Brazilian beauties, the dog that he was!

After that, he exchanged greetings with several friends, circulated about the room for a while, and finally withdrew to the library with his host and two other of his intimates for a rubber of whist.

Cecilia, escaping from the Royal presence with burning cheeks (for she hated to be the target of fulsome compliments), was intercepted by Mr. Fawnhope, who said with great simplicity: "You are more beautiful to-night than I had thought possible!"

"Oh, do not!" she exclaimed involuntarily. "How insufferably hot it is in this room!"

"You are flushed, but it becomes you. I will take you on to the balcony."

She made no demur, though this large term merely described the veriest footing built outside each one of the twelve long windows of the ballroom, and fenced in with low iron railings. Mr. Fawnhope parted the heavy curtains that veiled the window at the far end of the room, and passed through them into the shallow embrasure.

After a slight struggle with the bolt, Mr. Fawnhope succeeded in opening the door of the window, and she was able to step out on to the narrow balcony. A chill breeze fanned her cheeks, she said. "Ah, what a night! The stars!"

"The evening star, love's harbinger!" quoted Mr. Fawnhope, somewhat vaguely scanning the heavens.

This idyll was rudely interrupted. Mr. Rivenhall, having observed the retreat of the young couple, had followed them, and now stepped through the brocade curtains, saying harshly: "Cecilia, are you lost to all sense of propriety? Come back into the ballroom at once!"

Startled, Cecilia turned quickly. Already agitated by the unexpected encounter with Lord Charlbury, her nerves betrayed her into a hasty joinder.

"How dare you, Charles?" she said, in a trembling voice. "Pray, what impropriety am I guilty of in seeking the fresh air in the company of my betrothed husband?"

She took Mr. Fawnhope's hand as she spoke, and confronted her brother with her chin up, and her cheeks very much flushed. Lord Charlbury, who had drawn back the curtain with one hand, stood perfectly still, as pale as she was red, steadfastly regarding him.

"Oh!" cried Cecilia, hastily snatching her hand from Mr. Fawnhope's to press it to her cheek.

"May I know, Cecilia, what you have just announced is the truth?" asked his lordship, not a trace of emotion in his well-bred voice.

"Yes!" she uttered.

"The devil it is not!" said Mr. Rivenhall.

"You must permit me to offer you my felicitations," said Lord Charlbury, bowing, and then let the curtain fall, and walked away the length of the ballroom in the direction of the doors.

Sophy, about to take her place with Major Quinton in the set which was forming, deserted her partner with a word of excuse, and overtook his lordship in the ante-room. "Lord Charlbury!"

He turned. "Miss Stanton-Lacy! Will you tender my apologies to Lady Ombersley for my not taking formal leave of her? She is not at present in the ballroom."

"Yes, never mind that. What has occurred to make you leave so early?"

"I came, ma'am, with one purpose only in mind. It has been rendered useless by my to stay by your cousin's announcement a moment ago that she is betrothed to Mr. Fawnhope."

"What a goose she is!" she marked Sophy cheerfully. "I saw her go apart with Augustus, and I saw Charles follow her. Depend upon it, this is all his doing! I could hear his ears! Do you ever ride in the park?"

"Do I what?" he asked, bewildered.

"Ride in the park!"

"Certainly I do, but—"

"Then do so to-morrow morning! Not too early, I daresay I shall not be up until four o'clock! At ten, I don't fail!"

To be continued

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Portraits from the Archibald show

WILLIAM DOBELL. *This painting of Hedley R. Marston, F.R.S., by Australia's most discussed artist, William Dobell, was hung next to William Dargie's £500 winning entry (right) at the Archibald Prize exhibition in the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.*

WILLIAM DARGIE. *Award of the 1952 Archibald Prize to William Dargie for this portrait of Mr. Essington Lewis, C.H., was attacked by critics, and art students staged a protest demonstration in front of it. Many people, however, said they liked it.*

IVOR HELE. *1951 Archibald Prize winner, Ivor Hele, painted this portrait of Brigadier K. A. Wills, C.B.E., M.C., which aroused a lot of comment and favorable notice from both the Press and public. The exhibition will be open until March 8.*

WILLIAM PIDGEON (Wep), *who has designed many covers for The Australian Women's Weekly, exhibited this study of Ald. E. C. O'Dea, former Lord Mayor of Sydney. Artists from all over Australia enter portraits for the Archibald Prize.*

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Continuing . . . . The Pit In The Jungle

from page 10

enough frail smoke drifted up through the leafy gap in the jungle to excite the white cockatoos. Then the clothes went out.

They would not be able to try fire again. They listened, but there was no other sound.

At four o'clock the Old Man said, "No go. They didn't see it."

By five o'clock there were no more stones, but the precarious pile was high enough for a man standing on it to be able to reach the thatch with the strongest section of the big rod, which would let Heavy use the hook with more effect.

Heavy arranged a last stone on the pyramid and climbed. The Old Man yelled, "Look out!" And Heavy jumped clear as the pile of stones went towards its own middle with a clattering and muffled rumble, followed by a rush and a splash that was a long way down.

From the dark and earthy hole where the stones had been, the sounds of trickling water came clearly.

"Nasty spot!" the Old Man said, wiping his face. "We're better off on the second floor than in the basement!"

By shining the torch down, they could see a black, sheer-sided pool way down below.

The floor under the original gap in the thatch was still solid. Far, far up, the bright eyes and lifting and falling crests of cockatoos looked down from about the patch of blue sky.

Heavy said, "Sir —"

"Yes?" the Old Man said.

"Birds is very curious," Heavy said. "Especially cockatoos."

"Interesting!"

"Sir, if I tied my handkerchief to two of the fish rods tied together and poked it up through the hole, I think maybe a cockatoo would come down to see what it was. They do sort of look at everything."

"A pity!" the Old Man said. "Fine man before he went insane, but it's happened!" He turned purple. "We're stuck in this infernal grave and he thinks a cockatoo might come down to look at an infernal handkerchief!"

He passed into language that even Heavy had never heard before.

When things got quiet, Heavy said, "If he comes down, I just might be able to slip a noose of line over his head." He rushed the explanation. "You see, sir, they're so curious he'll be looking at the handkerchief and trying it in his beak and his hand."

The Old Man's eyes bulged. "If I got a noose over his head, I could pull him down," Heavy charged on.

"Doubtless teach him to speak, in time!" the Old Man strangled.

"Then I could tie the handkerchief to him and reel him out on the fish line. It seems cruel, but it wouldn't really hurt him. And, in time, he'd bite the line through. But first he'd go back to the top of the trees and flutter and try to fly, and he'd yell good and loud. No one might ever see, but someone might."

The Old Man stared at him for a long time. "Most cock-eyed thing I ever heard of! Try it!"

Heavy took out his purple silk handkerchief with the yellow-and-red spots and his plain red silk handkerchief.

"The purple one is sort of prettiest, but the red one shows more —"

"Either should do the work," the Old Man said. "Should both kill a respectable bird at first look!"

Heavy fixed the red one to the two fishing rods. On the end of the other fishing rod he made a slip noose, and then he was in difficulties. He couldn't manage the two rods and the single rod.

"I'll jiggle the infernal thing," the Old Man said. "This is rock bottom! A captain of Her Majesty's Navy fishing for parrots with a poisonous silk handkerchief! At least no one will know!"

"Don't wave it so much, sir!" Heavy said. "Just little moves, so he wonders why, but isn't frightened."

For half an hour bright eyes noted the little stirs of the handkerchief, then a young cockatoo began to sidle down into the gap in the forest. It lifted and lowered its crest questioningly.

Then the lovely wings opened and it dropped down like a flower falling to the forest floor, and for several minutes they couldn't see it. Then the crested head appeared at the edge of the hole in the thatch, turned sideways and regarded them.

They stayed very still. The cockatoo returned its attention to the handkerchief. What was it? Why did it move? Was it dangerous?

Twice it almost gave up the investigation and fled. Then it leaned far over, opening its beak for a tentative tweak. Heavy slipped the noose over its head and a screeching, fluttering bundle of feathers was in his hands.

"Don't be frightened, boy!" Heavy said.

As the flutters grew less and the bird froze to stillness, Heavy tied the freed end of the lightest line to one little leg; to the other he fastened half of the airy, light silk handkerchief. Then he tossed the bird up so that it vanished with a thrashing of white wings through the thatch hole.

He was terrified that it would rush into the bushes and entangle the line, but after a minute it came into view again, flapping as it fought its way upward to the gap in the treetops. He payed out the line carefully, not tight enough to trip the bird, not loose enough to catch.

In a moment the cockatoo had reached the jungle roof and was trying to go up like a maddened little kite. Each time the line stopped it, it fell beating on the treetops, shrieking plaintively. The handkerchief blazed red in the evening sun.

Constantly the attempt at escape was repeated, so that the bird was a red-and-white signal against the sky. Even as it sank on the thick foliage to recover its strength, it yelled and fluttered.

"Must say he's doing his best for us," the Old Man muttered.

Twenty minutes later the earth beneath them jarred dully. The Old Man grinned. "The ship's firing! They've seen him!"

Sunset was red on the topmost leaves as the tempo of the cockatoo shrieks increased. Then there were yells and voices above them, and the Old Man was shouting, "Down here! Look where you're going. Don't fall through, you blamed idiots!"

It took rope ladders and three hours of work before the Old Man sat again on firm ground and dusted himself off. And stars were thick above the gap in the forest as Heavy gently reeled the bird down to free it.

"He's pretty, all right!" Heavy said, cupping the crested thing in two huge hands.

Unexpectedly, the Old Man said, "Suppose it is up to us to find him a good home with an old lady or a little girl." His eye met Heavy's. "Just see that they live in our first port!"

Getting off watch a week later, Heavy went below, fast. The cockatoo was in its cage, lifting and lowering its crest. It was still uncertain, but it wasn't frightened now. Today there had even been a chuckle in its calling.

Heavy pulled up a stool and said, "Cocky."

The cockatoo rocked from one foot to the other. Then it dropped crabwise to the floor of the cage and moved sideways towards his finger. The snowy cheeks and sulphur crest puffed up and down. Then it gave a toddle and its feathered cheek just brushed against his finger as it bowed.

His heart stood still. Bird and man looked at each other. Then the absurdly curved beak reached out and caught the blunt finger end in a delicate and confiding grip.

The cocked bright eye was wicked, gnomelike and merry, but the beak on the finger was trusting and sociable. It was telling Heavy that it knew him and was his.

But to-morrow the ship would reach port. To-morrow night there would be nothing to hurry for.

Behind him a seaman said, "Captain's compliments!" He handed Heavy a dish of walnuts from the Old Man's table.

"Captain says he's got so used to hearing this bird of yours he'd get a dangerous shock if he could hear himself speak, so you'd better list the best canary seed or whatever the thing eats, so it can go on the next requisition for ship's stores!"

Heavy floundered to his feet while the smiles of a child's rapture broke over his battered face. "Captain said that?" he stammered.

"He did," the sailor said, grinning. "Said seeing as the bird is to be ship's mascot, he expects him to answer 'Aye, aye, sir!' and to say 'Eight bells and all's well' and that you'd better see to it he does . . . else you'll be walk the plank!"

"He will!" Heavy said. "You tell captain, he just will! And he has a good name. He's called Cocky!"

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The things that happen . . .

LIFE can be hard on a chap. Just when he thinks he's looking his best along comes a chum to put him in the shade! And all because his Mum doesn't use Persil.

Only Persil's suds have Oxygen

There's no secret about Persil whiteness. It's simply honest-to-goodness cleanness, through and through.

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P.90.WW.74

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Add glamor to plain gloves

Four easy ways to smarten gloves are shown on this page.

LACE, braid, or a garland of artificial daisies will transform your short, plain cotton gloves into chic accessories.

The black nylon glove illustrated at right shows how guipure lace can be used as a trim for afternoon and evening wear.

The addition of lace makes the glove long enough to cover the arm below a three-quarter sleeve, short enough to flatter a rounded arm.

Rayon or cotton gloves could carry a ruffle of broderie anglaise or crochet.

Pretty effects can be achieved by sewing black-eyed, yellow daisies on yellow "ninties," and yellow-centred white daisies on white cotton gloves.

Sew the flowers on tape long enough to stretch across the back of your wrist and tack the tape on the glove so that it can be removed easily when the gloves are washed.

Dark gloves can be dramatised by braid, as shown in the illustration below. Three-quarters of a yard of fancy white or pastel braid will do for a pair.

Halve the length and tack as shown.

Cool, white cotton gloves can be enriched by a trimming of white braid and bobbles, like those illustrated. The bobbles are made by sewing knots in the braid.

Put a pencil in the small glove-finger for easy sewing.

EASY WAY TO GLOVE GLAMOR: Lace at the wrist and a wristlet of daisies are both attractive. The daisies are attached to tape, which is then tacked to the glove.

TWO WAYS of using braid as a trim for gloves are shown above. Three-quarters of a yard of braid is needed to trim a pair of dark gloves, and about 1½yds. for a white pair.

Miss Precious Minutes Says:

TO measure out drops from a medicine bottle, wet the lip of the bottle. The drops can then be counted easily.

* * *

KEEP tacks or nails in screw-top glass jars, then you won't have to rummage through boxes to find the right ones.

* * *

If shoes squeak, rub the soles with a rag dipped in boiled linseed oil.

* * *

DON'T leave a scrubbing-brush with the bristles turned up: the water will run down, rot the wood, and loosen the bristles.

TO remove tea stains from cups: Wet with vinegar, dip a damp cloth in salt, and rub well.

* * *

TO treat scratches on silver, apply a paste made of whiting and olive oil and polish with a chamois.

* * *

IF you're about to do a really messy job, rub your hands and wrists with a lather of soap and allow to dry. This pre-soaping simplifies hand-cleaning later.

* * *

A TWO-INCH strip of elastic sewn to the inside of a belt makes a firm holder for a handkerchief.

Washing blankets

When washing woollen blankets, care is needed to prevent them from matting or felting and shrinking.

BEFORE washing examine the blankets carefully, mend broken or weak parts, and shake well to remove dust.

If bindings are badly soiled, rub with a thick mixture of the washing compound, using a sponge or soft brush to loosen the dirt.

Wash one blanket at a time, and use enough water to cover it.

Use soft water. If the water is hard, treat it with a reputable water softener or use a detergent which acts as both softener and cleanser.

If soap is used, be sure it is a type recommended for woollens and one that will dissolve thoroughly. The oils in wool, especially new wool, soak up suds rapidly, so add sufficient soap to keep the suds active.

The water should be tepid.

A blanket that is to be washed by hand should be soaked twice, first for 15 to 20 minutes, and then for five minutes.

Squeeze the suds through the blanket for two or three minutes as it is raised and lowered under water to avoid stretching. Never rub or twist.

Rinse quickly in two or more lots of water to make sure that all soap is removed, then squeeze out the excess water. Do not wring.

When washing a blanket by machine, follow the directions for the time of agitation and rinsing given by the manufacturer of the machine.

If possible, dry blanket in the shade over two or three parallel lines so that the weight is distributed to avoid stretching and hasten drying.

Turn during the drying period to prevent bulges.

Just before or after the blanket is dry, brush the surface lightly on both sides to raise the nap, working against the fall of the nap.

A whisk broom may be used for a good quality, firmly constructed blanket, and a soft bristle brush for a lighter, loosely woven blanket.

The binding may be ironed with a warm iron and a damp cloth.

BACK FOR MORE!

NEW HONEY-SWEET FLAVOUR delights everyone! Toasty, tasty bran—added to the best and most delicious part of wheat—that's Kellogg's Bran Flakes! Never before have two mouth-watering cereal foods been combined in one breakfast cereal. And, you get this "2-in-1" breakfast—for the price of one!

GENTLE LAXATIVE FOR ALL THE FAMILY! To the wheat which gives food value and energy, we've added just enough bran to provide gentle laxative action for every member of the family—from little Susan in this picture right up to you and Daddy, too. Ask your grocer for the NEW Kellogg's Bran Flakes today.

I combine TWO great cereal foods—FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Kellogg's BRAN FLAKES The "2 IN 1" Breakfast Cereal

BF52-3

Are YOUR dentures 'oxygen-clean'?

You'll be astonished the first time you immerse your dentures in 'Steradent.' They emerge purified, freed from unpleasant stains, film and odours. 'Steradent' is made specially to 'oxygen-clean' dentures, which means *safe, thorough* cleaning of every corner and crevice.

SOLD BY CHEMISTS ONLY

Steradent

'Oxygen-cleans' and sterilizes every type of denture.

5611

THE MANY FACES OF FINCH

Peter Finch, a young Australian actor who learned his trade in Sydney and soon became one of the most gifted stars in English Theatres and films, last month was signed up to star opposite Vivien Leigh in a big Hollywood film. You can read about Finch's remarkable career in the

FEBRUARY A.M., NOW ON SALE

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TODAY, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN ARE ENTHUSIASTICALLY SAYING

"I don't know how I ever did without a Sunbeam MIXMASTER"

Women who've had a Mixmaster for years . . . those who have had one only since last Mother's Day or Christmas . . . all unanimously agree that their Mixmaster is like another pair of hands to them. From breakfast time to supper, it does so many things—swiftly, perfectly, automatically.

Just a flick of the switch and Mixmaster whirls through the hard, tiring arm-work of mixing, beating, mashing, whipping, stirring, blending, creaming, folding, chopping, juicing—and does it *exactly* as it should be done. That's why Mixmaster mixing means *successful* cooking . . . makes possible the easy preparation of an exciting variety of new dishes . . . it's easy with a Mixmaster!

ONLY SUNBEAM MIXMASTER GIVES YOU ALL THESE EXCLUSIVE FEATURES

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"Tunes in" the correct beating speed for every food-mixing task, from potato mashing to whipping meringues.

SUNBEAM BEATER EJECTOR

Glistening, chrome-plated Sunbeam "Full-Mix" beaters are automatically ejected for quick and easy cleaning. No unscrewing—no messy fingers.

SUNBEAM BOWL-SPEED CONTROL

A nylon button fitted to one of the Mixmaster beaters automatically keeps bowl-speed and beater-speed uniform, ensuring thorough, even mixing.

SUNBEAM BEATER ADJUSTMENT LEVER

Adjusts the beaters to the correct position for both bowls—automatically.

SUNBEAM PORTABILITY

Mash or chop vegetables in the saucepan or beat something cooking on the stove by simply lifting motor and beaters wherever needed. No mechanical work, nothing to go wrong.

SUNBEAM AUTOMATIC JUICE EXTRACTOR

Gets all the juice—faster—from pineapples, oranges, lemons and other citrus fruits. Use it also for pulping fruits.

AUTOMATIC MOTOR CONTROL

The powerful, automatically controlled Sunbeam motor gives smooth running and even mixing on every speed—it has extra power to spare even when handling the heaviest batters.

at your service —free

Sunbeam Mixmaster owners not only have the finest food mixer made—they also have available to them the full assistance of the Sunbeam Advisory Bureau. This FREE Service will not only help you to get the full benefit of your Mixmaster, but will answer any food-mixing or cookery problems. Write for advice or special recipes . . . and watch for announcement regarding Mixmaster attachments—Meat Grinder and Drink Mixer.

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Recipes win cash prizes

HERE'S a good dish for Monday night's dinner. Made from cold meat, parsley sauce, and mashed potatoes, it is topped with cheese. See prize recipe.

The £5 prize in this week's popular recipe contest is awarded to a dinner dish prepared from cold meat with peas and mashed potatoes.

ANY cold cooked meat, baked, corned, or tinned, may be used for the potato ring.

It is practically a dinner-in-one dish, and makes a complete main course served with one other vegetable.

For a quick dessert try the baked banana pudding which wins a consolation prize. The bananas are sliced straight into the mixture, which speeds up the preparation.

The other consolation prize-winner is a recipe for baked devilled eggs in curry sauce.

All spoon measurements are level.

CREAMED LAMB IN POTATO RING

One and a half cups mashed potato, 2 cups diced roast lamb, 2 cups medium thickness white sauce, 1 cup cooked peas, ¼ cup chopped parsley, 1 finely chopped white onion, salt and pepper, 2 or 3 tablespoons grated cheese.

Prepare sauce, add chopped onion and parsley, mix well, simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Add lamb and peas, keep hot. Line the sides of a greased ovenware dish with three-quarters of the mashed and creamed potato. Fill lamb mixture into centre, pipe or spoon balance of potato around edge. Sprinkle cheese over potato. Bake in hot oven until thoroughly heated and top lightly browned. Garnish with parsley.

First Prize of £5 to Miss I. E. Horley, c/o Mrs. Brumley, Canterbury Hills, Mt. Eccles, S. Gippsland, Vic.

BAKED BANANA PUDDING

Two tablespoons butter or substitute, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 egg, grated rind and juice of 1 large orange, 1 cup self-raising flour (or 1 cup plain flour and 2 teaspoons baking powder), 2 medium-sized bananas.

Cream butter or substitute with sugar and orange rind. Add orange juice, mix well. Fold in sifted flour, then peeled and sliced bananas. Fill into greased ovenware dish and bake in moderate oven 25 to 30 minutes. Serve hot or cold with cream or custard.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. J. Lang, Box 31, Charleville, Qld.

BAKED DEVILLED EGGS

Four hard-boiled eggs, 1 teaspoon butter, 1 dessertspoon finely chopped chives or shallots, 1 dessertspoon chopped parsley, pinch salt and cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon each of tomato and Worcestershire sauce.

Sauce: One tablespoon butter or substitute, 1½ tablespoons flour, 1 teaspoon curry powder (according to taste), salt, 1½ cups milk.

Slice eggs in halves lengthwise. Remove yolks and mash. Add butter, chives, parsley, cayenne, and sauces, mix well. Season to taste with salt. Pile mixture back into egg-white cases, place in greased ovenware dish or individual dishes with two or three egg halves in each. Prepare sauce. Melt butter, add flour, curry powder, and salt, stir until smooth. Cook 2 minutes without browning. Add milk, stir until boiling. Pour over and around eggs. Bake in moderate oven until eggs are heated through. Serve with boiled rice or potatoes.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Miss B. Wilson, 7 Auburn Rd., Hawthorn, Vic.

Practical, pretty layette

SUITABLE clothes are necessary for baby's well-being and comfort.

Many young mothers are not sufficiently experienced to know the type of garments that should be included in a layette.

Sister Mary Jacob, our Mothercraft Nurse, has designed patterns for a practical and pretty layette. The patterns and instructions for the making may be obtained from The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney. Price 3/6, postage free.

The handyman's hints

STOUT CORD tied across a bucket at the handle-grips makes a good brush rest when you are kalsomining or wallpapering. It is also useful for wiping excess kalsomine or paste from the brush after dipping.

FINISHED or semi-finished wood surfaces should never be struck with a hammer. A block of hardwood used as a buffer between hammer-head and wood surface will prevent any marring or denting of the surface.

WASHING CLOTHES IS A FULL-SIZE JOB

CHOOSE A "POPE" . . . WASH AND WRING MORE CLOTHES CLEANER, WHITER, BRIGHTER . . . FASTER

Why take half measures on washday, when you can have the whitest, brightest, cleanest clothes ever, in a fraction of the time, with a wonderful, full-size "Pope" in your laundry. There's room and to spare for ALL the family wash in the deep, roomy "Pope" tub . . . why, you'll handle a two week's wash or extra bedclothes with ease. And just look at that streamlined beauty—it's specially designed to fit any laundry, however small. So—don't settle for less . . . buy a full-size, dependable "Pope" Washer, and say goodbye to weary work-all-day washdays forever!

IT PAYS TO BUY THE . . .

FULL SIZE! FULL VALUE! FULLY GUARANTEED!

Pope WASHING MACHINE

TRY A "POPE" AT HOME LEADING STORES WILL DEMONSTRATE

ALL ELECTRIC MODELS
• NOW AVAILABLE

OTHER MODELS
230 VOLT D.C. and 32 VOLT LIGHTING PLANT MODELS
• AVAILABLE NOW

MODELS WITH ELECTRIC PUMP
• AVAILABLE SOON

ELECTRIC PUMPS SUITABLE FOR EXISTING MODELS
• AVAILABLE SOON

- Completely Rustproof
- Direct Drive — only 4 moving parts — no belts or pulleys to wobble and wear
- Specially designed 'Pope' Motor full floating silent power
- One-piece, seamless, aluminium tub—no joins or welds

EXCLUSIVE. GENTLE, THOROUGH "AQUAVANE" WASHING PRINCIPLE

I symbolise the unique "Aquavane" washing principle. Inside the tub I create millions of activated bubbles tiny pressure centres that surge through the wash, gently coax out all grime and stains, washing and re-washing every item in the tub . . . saving clothes, soap and hot water.

FREE! For the Children!
Write for colourful, interesting booklet "How the World Washes" to Pope Products Limited in your State.

Value Thru' and Thru' and backed by the maker's own
☆ 12 MONTHS GUARANTEE
☆ 12 MONTHS FREE SERVICE
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DELICIOUS VELVEETA

GRILLS TO PERFECTION

Makes a nourishing meal of a hot, tasty snack...

because it's richer in food values than ordinary cheese.

In ordinary cheese-making precious lactose (milk sugar), much vitamin B_2 and milk minerals are lost. They are run off in the whey—gone forever! But the *new process* used to make Velveeta puts these food values back! Adds them to the other vitamins, protein, calcium and phosphates you and your family need for perfect health. That's why Velveeta is richer in food values than ordinary cheese. This *new process* makes Velveeta spread like butter. And you don't need butter! In fact, Velveeta on bread without butter gives you the scientifically *correct* balance of primary food elements. And it's the *new process* that gives Velveeta a "different" rich yet mild flavour everyone loves. So for *extra* value, buy Velveeta—in the yellow packet. Processed and pasteurized for purity.

Velveeta not only grills to perfection—it makes the most delicious toasted sandwiches for supper. Perfect for party savouries, for soufflés and omelettes.

Sold everywhere in the 8 oz. packet

Enjoy that RICH-YET-MILD flavour

VELVEETA

MADE BY KRAFT

MELTS AND GRILLS TO PERFECTION — SPREADS LIKE BUTTER

KFL 75

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EGGS... Plus

By Our Food and Cookery Experts

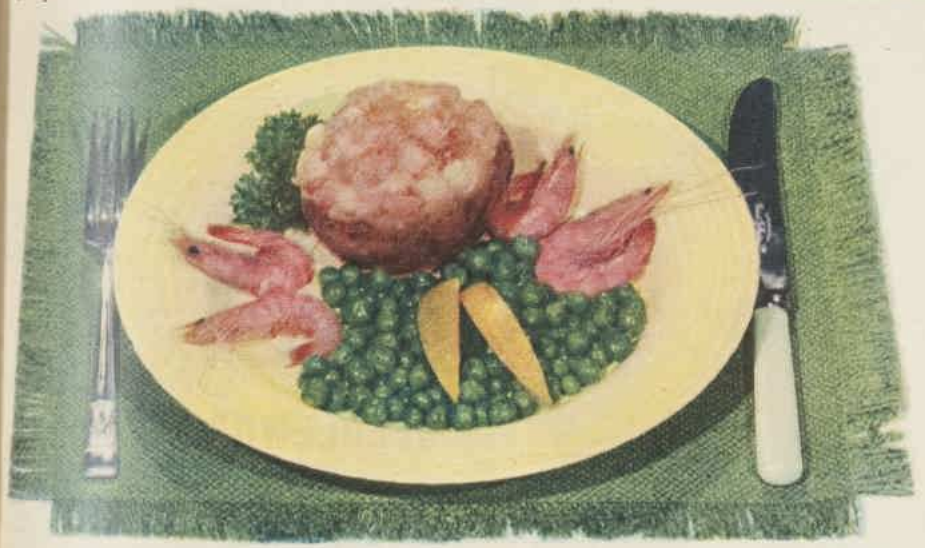
• Using eggs as a main ingredient, many appetising and savory dishes may be made, giving variety to the menu and adding food value to the diet.

INVALUABLE in providing emergency snacks or luncheon courses, they are cheaper than meat, and their keeping qualities make them one of the best stand-by ingredients.

Eggs are one of the most important body-building foods and are especially good for children.

All spoon measurements are level.

SAVORY EGGS IN BACON RINGS are a satisfying luncheon dish. Served on tomato and pineapple rings with browned potato slices, one egg is sufficient for each serving. Tomato sauce may be used instead of chutney.



POTATOES MAKE GOOD CASES for savory eggs mariniere. They are baked in their jackets until soft, then halved and the pulp nearly all scooped out. The cases are then filled with scrambled eggs mixed with chopped prawns.

EGGS MARINIERE

Four large potatoes, 4 eggs, 4 tablespoons milk, ¼ teaspoon salt, pinch cayenne pepper, 1 dessertspoon butter, ¼lb. chopped shelled prawns, mayonnaise (may be omitted), paprika, parsley and lemon to garnish.

Scrub and dry potatoes, bake unpeeled until soft. Cut in halves, scoop out pulp, leaving cases about ¼in. thick. Brush with melted butter, dust with salt and cayenne pepper. Scramble eggs with milk, salt, pepper, and butter. When thickened, fold in chopped prawns, fill in potato cases. Top with a dab of mayonnaise and dust with paprika. Garnish with whole prawns, parsley, and lemon.

BAKED EGGS CELESTINE

Four eggs, ¼ cup soft breadcrumbs, ¾ cup grated cheese, 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion, 3 dessertspoons (or more) butter or substitute, salt and pepper, parsley.

Saute onion in melted butter or substitute until soft and yellow but not browned. Add crumbs, cheese, salt, and pepper. Divide mixture between 4 thickly greased ramekin-dishes. Break an egg into each, sprinkle lightly with pepper and salt. Bake in moderate oven until eggs are just set. Garnish with parsley.

EGGS MORNAY

Six hard-boiled eggs, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute, 1 dessertspoon finely chopped shallots or 1 teaspoon finely chopped onion, 2 tablespoons flour, 2 cups milk, 1-3rd cup finely diced ham or chopped cooked bacon, 2oz. grated cheese, salt, pepper, soft breadcrumbs, extra butter or substitute.

Melt butter or substitute, add shallot or onion, and cook until soft without browning. Stir in flour, cook 2 or 3 minutes longer. Add milk, stir until boiling. Fold in quartered hard-boiled eggs, ham or bacon, and half the cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Divide into individual ramekin-dishes, lightly greased. Top with balance of cheese mixed with crumbs. Dot with extra butter or substitute, bake in moderate oven until tops are browned.

SAVORY EGGS IN BACON RINGS

Six slices ripe pineapple cut ¾in. thick, butter or substitute, 6 slices tomato (slightly smaller and thinner than the pineapple slices), 6 bacon rashers, chutney, 6 eggs, salt, pepper, parsley.

Saute pineapple slices lightly in butter or substitute, place on greased oven tray. Top each pineapple slice with a tomato slice, dust with salt and pepper. Place in moderate oven to bake while preparing savory eggs. Remove rind from bacon rashers, grill until just cooked. Grease 6 muffin-tins or large-size patty-tins, place a small spoonful of chutney in each, line sides with cooked bacon. Break an egg into each, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in oven with pineapple and tomato slices for 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set. Loosen bacon around edges, turn out on to tomato and pineapple slices. Garnish with parsley, serve at once.

CREOLE OMELET

Omelet: **Three dessertspoons flour, ½ cup milk, 4 eggs, ¼ teaspoon salt.**

Creole Sauce: **One tablespoon butter or substitute, 1 dessertspoon chopped onion, 6 chopped olives (optional), 1½ cups chopped peeled tomatoes, ½ very small green pepper (finely chopped), 1 teaspoon sugar, salt and cayenne pepper to taste, 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce or a few drops chili sauce.**

Make sauce first and keep hot over boiling water until omelet is cooked. Melt butter or substitute, add onion and olives. Cover and cook 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and green pepper, sugar, salt, and cayenne pepper. Cook until thick. Flavor with Worcestershire or chili sauce, cover, and keep hot.

Omelet: Simmer blended flour and milk 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Fold in beaten egg-yolks, then, lastly, egg-whites, beaten stiffly with salt. Pour into hot, well-greased pan, allow to set over steady heat. Place under griller to brown top. Fold over, remove to serving-plate, pour sauce over, and serve at once. Sufficient for 2 or 3 servings.

THIS FOUR-EGG OMELET will provide three servings served with piquant Creole sauce. Tomatoes, green pepper, onions, and olives flavor the savory sauce, which is made first so that the omelet can be served as soon as it is cooked.

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HOW TO BE REGULAR WITHIN 10 DAYS

(without purgatives)

"AFTER YEARS OF SUFFERING-JUST ONE WEEK WITH YOUR ALL-BRAN AND I WAS REGULAR AGAIN!"

Mrs. J. GORDON
7 Stevens St., Randwick

Complete Satisfaction or Double Your Money Back

This is all you need do . . . enjoy tasty, toasty Kellogg's All-Bran for ten days, and drink plenty of water. If, at the end of ten days you don't feel it has helped you, then just send the empty packet back to Kellogg's and you'll get double your money back.

BULK IS THE ANSWER!

Your daily health and regularity depend on what you eat. Kellogg's All Bran is not a purgative. It contains the *bulk* your system needs to end constipation. The vital bulk in this rich, nut-sweet health-food helps prepare internal wastes for easy, gentle elimination . . . no purgatives needed this *natural* way.

Ask your grocer for a packet of Kellogg's All-Bran right away. Within ten days you'll benefit. After that keep on enjoying this crisp nut-sweet breakfast cereal. Never lose that wonderful feeling of health and natural regularity it brings.

YOU BENEFIT 3 WAYS

Kellogg's All-Bran is a natural laxative, health-food and blood tonic all in one! Rich in Vitamin B1, B2, Calcium, Phosphorus, Niacin and Iron, Kellogg's All-Bran builds up your health. It gives you vitality as it brings regularity instead of purging the energy out of you.

Kellogg's ALL-BRAN*

*Registered Trade Mark

END IRREGULARITY—the way NATURE intended

CRISP NUT-SWEET FLAVOUR

A-B52-5

For your protection

On cuts and scratches; in the sick room from which infection may spread; for first aid and children's injuries, for feminine hygiene, use 'Dettol.'

When you use 'Dettol' you follow the example of most doctors, hospitals and nursing homes.

DETTOL

The Modern Antiseptic

OBTAINABLE FROM ALL CHEMISTS

Sportswomen are no joke

Fifty years ago the sportswoman was a favorite butt of cartoonists and comic writers. To-day the situation has changed.

Women athletic performances to-day beat men's records of half a century ago, and they often make more money as professionals than most of their male rivals.

You can read a comprehensive and informative article about the rise of women's sport and the achievements of its stars in the

Feb. A.M., Now On Sale

STOP KIDNEY POISONING TODAY

If you suffer from Rheumatism, Sleepless Nights, Leg Pains, Backache, Lumbago, Nervousness, Headaches and Colds, Dizziness, Circles Under Eyes, Swollen Ankles, Loss of Appetite or Energy, your system is being poisoned because germs are impairing the vital powers of your kidneys. You must kill the germs which cause these troubles, as blood can't be pure till kidneys function normally. Stop troubles with Cystex—the new scientific discovery which starts benefit in 2 hours. Get Cystex from your chemist or store to-day. It must prove satisfactory or money back.

Fashion PATTERNS

PATTERN FOR BEGINNERS

F2455. — Beginners' pattern for skirt with wrap-over front and smart sash finish. Sizes 24in. to 30in. waist. Requires 1½yds. 54in. material and 1yd. 36in. contrast for sash. Special price, 2/-.

FASHION PATTERNS and Needlework Notions may be obtained immediately from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 445 Harris St., Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 4069, G.P.O., Sydney). Tasmanian readers should address orders to Box 64-A, G.P.O., Hobart; New Zealand readers to Box 1041, G.P.O., Auckland.

F2453.—Attractive, long-sleeved frock with inset pockets in slim skirt. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 2¾yds. 54in. material. Price, 3/6.

F2454.—Smart frock with double-breasted effect on bodice and full skirt. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3¼yds. 54in. material. Price, 3/6.

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F2456.—Little girl's frock with long sleeves and neat pleated skirt. Sizes, length 27in., 31in., 34in., and 39in. for 8, 10, 12, and 14 years. Requires 2½yds. 54in. material. Price, 2/6.

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F2457. — Braided dressing-gown with fitted waistline and flared skirt. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4½yds. 54in. material and 3yds. braid. Price, 4/9.

★

F2458.—A yoked nightgown prettily styled with lace-trimmed collar and three-quarter sleeves. Sizes 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4½yds. 36in. material and 3½yds. lace edging. Price, 4/9.

NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 395.—SMALL GIRL'S PINAFORE AND BLOUSE

Neat outfit for the small girl for cooler days obtainable cut or ready to make in Cesora. Choice of colors for pinafore include pink, maize, green, and cream; blouse in cream only. Size: Half length for 2 years, pinafore 21/11, blouse 17/6; 20in. for 4 years, pinafore 22/9, blouse 18/6; 23in. for 6 years, pinafore 23/6, blouse 19/3; 27in. for 8 years, pinafore 25/-, blouse 19/11. Postage and registration for pinafore, 1/8 extra; blouse, 1/4 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 6/11 sent by registered post.

No. 394.—DUCHESSE SET

Prettily designed duchesse set obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider in heavy Irish linen in cream, also in sheer linen in shades of green, sky-blue, lemon, pink, and white. The narrow lace edging to finish raw edges is not supplied. Sizes: Centre mat, 11in. x 17in.; smaller mats, 7in. x 8in. Price, 8/11. Postage, 7d. extra.

No. 397.—SEVEN TEA-TOWELS

Set of seven linen tea-towels traced ready to embroider with blue, red, or green border. Size: 22in. x 32in. Price, set of 7, 47/6. Postage and registration, 2/7 extra for N.S.W., 4/3 extra for interstate. Towels obtainable singly, 6/11 each. Postage, 8d. extra.

No. 396.—SMALL BOY'S PANTS AND SHIRT

Twosome for the small boy obtainable cut or ready to make in Cesora. Shirt is in cream only; the pants in brown, grey, or green. Sizes: 18in. length for 2 years, pants 16/11, shirt 17/6; 20in. for 4 years, pants 17/9, shirt 18/6; 23in. for 6 years, pants 18/3, shirt 19/3; 27in. for 8 years, pants 19/3, shirt 19/11. Postage and registration, 1/4 extra each.

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Strange Day

Summer Holiday Reading

WHEN RALPH BEE and his wife, ISABELLE, are parted for a day, Isabelle visiting her sick mother, both their peaceful lives suddenly slip out of the familiar domestic pattern. Ralph deliberately misses his train to go to work in his bank and starts off on a hitch-hike. He is picked up by JAMES HARTNETT, who takes him to his home. Here Ralph prevents Hartnett's estranged wife from committing suicide.

Isabelle's odd day begins by meeting up with a desperate mother, RICKY STAPP, who tells her how her little boy, FRANKIE, has been taken away from her by his dissolute father. Isabelle effects an amazing rescue and plans to send Ricky and Frankie off to safety in California.

Meanwhile, Ralph, on the road again, is given a lift by a truck-driver, QUAYLOR. They are having a meal in a roadhouse when two gangsters force Quaylor to leave, but Ralph, with surprising bravado, refuses to go and faces the gangsters alone. NOW READ ON.

PART TWO

As Ralph Bee gazed up into the gangster's face, he thought not only of the insanity that had commanded him since the morning, the complete reversal of every habit and tendency that normally prevailed, but he thought also of General Barnard E. Bee, "There stands Jackson like a stone wall . . ."

Ralph was free; he was an American. More than any native prosy pride, he felt the strange new temper that stiffened within him.

"I'm not going."

"You better," said Dutcher's sandy voice.

Ralph cried—wishing that he could talk like Henry Morgan or John Garfield or Leif Ericson or somebody like that, but realising in concurrent disgust that his voice had become almost as feminine and high-pitched as Izzo's—"No, I don't have to go! I've got just as much right to sit here and eat my steak—I've got just as much right in this restaurant as you or Mr. Myonko or anybody else! You can't shove me around" and he added, in what was almost a piercing squawk—"chum!"

He was unprepared for the bray of laughter that resounded from the booth where Myonko sat. Freddy Dutcher jerked his head quickly to look at his associate. Joe Myonko was rolling to and fro, clapping his palms against the table in front of him.

Then he waddled over to Ralph Bee's table and patted Ralph's shoulder. "What a guy! He's a character, Freddy."

Dutcher asked, "Want me to throw him out of here?"

"Don't bother the guy," said Myonko. And to Ralph, "Those steaks are on me. You sit right there and finish every bite. You're the first person I ever heard pop off to Freddy—except maybe a girl or two."

They strolled to the washroom, leaving Ralph to finish his steak. He discovered that his hands were trembling. He dropped his fork. He could scarcely pick it up again. He could eat no more; he could not finish this meal that had become the symbol of his courage. He was mortified, and glad that no one was there to see him.

The shrinking waiter brought his coffee. Myonko and Dutcher stood at the bar. Myonko had taken out a small notebook, and he was showing something to Dutcher. His tone was so low that Ralph could hear nothing of what was said.

The voices went a little higher. Myonko swore rapidly in his nervous snarl, and Dutcher said hurriedly, "Have it your way. I'll get Kennedy on the phone."

"I'll talk to him myself."

"Will he be at his big place?"

"No. Try him at Benny's. I think he'll be with Benny."

There was no telephone booth in the cafe, only a wall phone near the front end of the bar. Dutcher dropped a coin into the phone and called a number. He seemed to have difficulty in persuading someone to put Kennedy on the line, but finally he turned and motioned to his partner.

Myonko moved to the phone and took the receiver from Dutcher's hand. With his own right hand he was rubbing his filthy wadded handkerchief against his mouth. Although he spoke rapidly, Ralph could hear every word.

"Listen, Kennedy, it's no good. I wouldn't make enough . . . No, it's not the first time I've turned you down. I turned you down lots of times before . . . No, I'm not afraid of him, either. There isn't a thing he could do for me or to me. I know too many people, see? No, I wouldn't worry about that . . . No, not even for fifty . . . Sure, send them over. Over at Fish Creek Forge. Yeah, the old inn . . . I'll stop by later, maybe see you to-night at your place. G'bye."

He hung up the receiver and stood shaking his head. "He's sending a couple of guys from Miami over to see us. It's about you-know-what," he told Dutcher. "Imagine him! He even put it up to fifty."

"He ought to have talked fifty all along," said Dutcher, and they both laughed, and then held a whispered consultation for at least ten minutes longer.

Myonko nodded almost pleasantly to Ralph. "How about a drink, Mac?"

"No, thank you," said Ralph.

Freddy Dutcher called toward the kitchen, "Hey, Shanks, we need a drink."

To page 44

"Isabelle, Isabelle," said LeRoy, taking her arm in his hot hands, "we could mean so much to each other."

Our exciting two-part novel by MacKINLAY KANTOR

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and the waiter came flying to serve them.

"Just a little one." Myonko still nodded at Ralph. "You're a nice guy."

Ralph pushed back his chair. For a moment he felt that he should resist these men, but the thrill of having a drink with them was a bait in itself.

"O.K.," he said, as easily as he could. "Make mine a brandy." He moved toward the bar.

"He's a nice guy," said Myonko. "Don't you think so, Freddy?" and he put his hand on Ralph's sleeve.

"He's a stinky little guy," said Dutcher. "Imagine a character like him drinking brandy! You ought to have a Coke, Caspar. Brandy will put hair on your chest."

Ralph said firmly, "I don't want a Coke. I want cognac or nothing."

"Well, I'll have the Coke," said Myonko. "I don't drink, see. Not alcohol. I quit drinking when I was in the jug."

"You take benzedrene!" said Freddy Dutcher accusingly.

"I got to," said Myonko. "It's on account of my glands."

Shanks, the waiter, served them. Ralph stood drinking at the bar between these monstrous people, possessed of a sense of such complete unreality that he could not even feel the floor beneath his feet.

He tried to think of folks at the bank. He tried to envision Isabelle and the Pflagers and other friends. He wondered how they might react if they were to walk into the Fish Creek Forge Inn at this moment. Probably they would not believe what they saw. They would think that the man they saw was Ralph Bee's double, and not Ralph Bee at all.

Myonko said, "See if they got 'Lovesick' on that organ, Freddy."

"The heck with an old tune like that," said Freddy. "I thought you didn't want it on."

"Hook it up. We're not in conference now."

Dutcher strolled back to the jukebox and bent down to connect the plug that he had ripped out earlier. He thrust the prongs into the slots, and once more the baleful lights showed, the mechanism began to switch about, and bubbles flowed through the colored surfaces.

Freddy Dutcher was standing there with his back to the room, studying the list of song titles; Myonko was wiping his lips; and the waiter was just sliding a chaser glass of water across to Ralph Bee, when the front door opened and two men walked into the room.

There was no time for Ralph to discern very much about these men, except that they were both about the same size and both wore felt hats. They were undistinguished as to dress. One had a tan coat—he didn't know what color of coat the other man had, but it was dark cloth—and both men seemed to be carrying paper bags in their right hands.

Ralph heard a voice say what sounded like "Are these the ones?" and heard an answering "Yeah." Brown paper sacks fell loose from the right hands of both men. Even before the hollow sacks had touched the floor, the men had aimed their black pistols.

The room burst and thundered with the sound of rapid explosions. Something like an insect brushed beyond Ralph Bee's right ear with a screaming sigh, but he was not touched by any of the bullets.

Ralph found himself down on his knees, one hand grasping the rail in front of the bar, and he knew that for a moment at least he had pressed his eyes tightly shut.

He opened his eyes in time to see Myonko walking gingerly across the room, and seeming to hold one hand against his chest—perhaps both hands; Ralph didn't know. Myonko was tiptoeing in his later paces.

Step after step he rose, higher and higher on his toes, and was more and more off balance, and yet amazingly he walked another step or two, his small shiny shoes trying to keep pace with the momentum of his body.

Then he toppled across a table, smashed the table with his weight, and rolled to the floor with a frail chair collapsed under him.

The two men came farther into the room. They paid no more attention to Ralph or to Shanks than if they had not been there.

The man in the tan coat fired twice more, standing deliberately above Myonko and shooting down at him at close range, and each time a dust or spray seemed to fly from Myonko's clothing as the bullets struck.

Ralph Bee turned his head slowly. He thought that his head was now made of stone or concrete and weighed far, far too much; and it required the greatest effort to manipulate the machinery of this head-turning ordeal.

Freddy Dutcher was lying on his back in front of the jukebox. Inside the machine, for all the breakage of upper glass and burnished rims, a female voice was moaning, "I thought I was immune to you, but now I want to croon to you. . . ."

Freddy Dutcher lay flat, one hand flung wide across the floor. His thick-soled sports shoes were turned at a peculiar and identical angle.

Ralph's ears echoed from the sharp explosions. Through this maltreatment of time and distance and human identities, one of the killers whispered (maybe he shouted, but it seemed like a whisper), "Let's go." They both floated toward the door, opened the door, and floated off into space.

There was a scramble and a pattering sound behind the bar. Ralph rose up stupidly and sagged there, holding to the bar with both hands and swallowing again and again. A burbling noise crept from his throat. His breath seemed gone out of him.

Shanks emerged into the open space before the kitchen door. He was travelling rapidly on his hands and knees, and for a moment Ralph Bee thought that Shanks, too, must have been shot. But the waiter stood up and turned toward Ralph, and his face was not pale at all. It was nearly purplish-red, and his eyes were demented.

"Gonna get outa here," croaked Shanks. He rushed into the kitchen, and Ralph heard a back door slam.

People were yelling out in front somewhere, near the service station. Ralph followed on Shanks' trail through the kitchen; he found himself possessed of his hat and overcoat, but certainly could not remember snatching them from the brass hook where they had hung.

Ralph saw the tables, the stove and griller, the many hanging pots and pans. He would remember forever a sliced lemon on a breadboard. Only half the lemon was sliced, and the fragments were paper-thin.

He had reached the outer door, and beyond a filthy area of garbage cans and black ice and piled-up cases of bottles he saw Shanks climbing through a fence and disappearing behind some trees.

Yes, yes, Ralph told himself. Shanks was right! Get out of here, get away. He thought of Isabelle, and it seemed to him that he could hear Grace barking and running about the house in Middlefield.

STRANGE DAY

He held no specific fear—neither fear against the return of the killers, nor terror of the deed they had just performed, nor dread of a flight from rage that would follow.

He was not even aware that he might in some manner be obstructing justice, or at least turning renegade to his duties as a citizen. He owned only one thought: to get away as rapidly as possible.

Ralph followed after Shanks through the fence and into the rocky woods, walking at first, then trotting, then breaking into a plunging gallop. He fell once, and realised after he had staggered to his feet that he was fortunate; he had fallen on cold, dry grass among cold, dry leaves, and had not torn or dirtied his clothes. He worked his way more craftily through the barren bushes.

Ralph saw no more of Shanks. He passed near a farm, and some cows looked at him. He heard a dog barking, but it wasn't Grace. And at last, floating eerily aloft, far, far behind him, the thin cry of sirens unwound on the highway.

There was a gravelled road. Ralph crossed it, and went for a time across farther fields. He was unable to estimate how far he travelled: perhaps a mile, two miles or more—he didn't know.

He was walking blankly, no longer running. He stopped seriously to brush his clothes, to wipe the awful bar-room dust from his trousers.

Finally he sat in a grove near a neat fence that had a gate in it. He sat there for a long time, huddled in and on his tweed coat, leaning his head against a beech tree, trying to think, trying to catch his breath.

The petty but complex recollection of a life he had lived and yet abandoned so lately . . . oh, what craze had driven him? And what had happened to him on this day, and what would happen to him on the next and the next? Had he altogether evacuated himself from the Bankers Providential Trust and Savings, from Izzo and Grace and everyone and everything else?

This brutal wave now broke upon the hunched and shivering shoulders of Ralph Bee's soul, and he gave an audible gasp that he himself could hear through the woods. He heard it echoed back by distant underbrush and by the serene age of the oaks.

. . . . . .

Isabelle turned off the main highway and worked her way south and then it was only a matter of minutes to the Newark airport. The air was pealing with a mutter of engines.

"Please, Mrs.——" Ricky's cry came from the rear, where she sat straining her arms around the child. "Where are you taking us?"

Isabelle was too good a driver and too intent on her purpose to move her eyes from the front, yet it was as if she turned her head and witnessed the abject wonder.

"This is the Newark airport."

"You mean——"

Isabelle cried, more to herself than to the tousled little creature she befriended, "I'm going to do it. Of course I'm going to! I can do anything I want to. I'm going to put you both on an aeroplane and send you to California. You see, dear, those people may call the police and tell them some lies. Probably they will. But I doubt that they'll be thinking in terms of airports."

Without even considering, she knew that Ricky had never ridden in an aeroplane. The girl was with that great staring multitude, half wistful, half fearful—the people who gabbled on spectator decks beyond the ramps and steel fences at terminals; who brought their children on Sunday afternoons to watch the silvered hulks hoist themselves aloft.

One of those who giggled and wondered and said, "Gee, I'd be scared"; who told each other about friends and neighbors who had flown to Baltimore or Toledo, about brothers who had flown to Berlin or Tokio; who paid rapt attention to the sun-spectacled strangers who lugged their briefcases through the gates, and wondered if perhaps they were looking upon movie stars; who had never identified themselves with this devilish enterprise of the present and future because it represented a thing so remote and exalted, so without bargainable price that they might not even aspire to it. They would dream, perhaps, for their children.

"It costs an awful lot of money, Mrs. . I couldn't ever pay you back."

Bludgeoned into honesty by the strife that had possessed her, she said frankly, "Probably you can't ever pay me, Ricky. I don't care. It doesn't matter."

Ricky thought about that, while Isabelle was backing into a parking space. "Are you real rich?"

"Certainly not. But I inherited two little summer cottages near Boonton, so I have an income—my own bank account. It's mine. It won't affect—you know—the household budget or anything like that."

Ricky closed her eyes suddenly as an aeroplane boomed over their heads on a take-off. The little boy turned marvelling eyes toward the car roof.

"We would go on the bus. It costs a lot." Ricky seemed to have no thought of criticising Isabelle because she had not restored the stolen bus ticket. "They don't charge anything for Frankie on the bus, but I guess he'd have to pay on an aeroplane."

Isabelle flung open the car door. "I want to take you to the ladies' room. There'll be soap and water and towels and things. You can clean Frankie up."

While the girl and the child were thus engaged, Izzo stood before a flight counter, begging for details, feeling her heart jump as she glanced at the clock.

"Twelve o'clock, noon — that's the only one?"

"That's correct, madam. Practically all the California flights leave La Guardia Field on Long Island. Unless you prefer to have your friends wait until to-night? This is about the only connecting flight we have. They would change in Chicago to a non-stop flight."

"What is the fare?"

He figured it out, with tax, and her heart turned over again. She had only sixteen dollars in her purse.

"How much for a child two and a half years old?"

The young man looked at her kindly, and one eyebrow quivered in a kind of signal. "You're sure the child isn't under two?"

She would be honest, she would tell the whole truth. It appeared that she could tell nothing but fundamental truths from now on. She said firmly, "He's a little over two and a half, as a matter of fact."

"Then that would have to be a half fare additional."

Isabelle ran to the ladies' room, where she found Frankie minus his snow suit and freshly clad in striped polo shirt and shorts. He was sputtering and yowling as his mother scrubbed him valiantly.

"Ricky, you and Frankie wait here. I've got to run in to Newark and cash a cheque. Just sit down out in the lobby. There's plenty of room. There's a stand where you can buy apples or sandwiches or whatever you want." She tore herself away and pounced upon the taxi drivers who were lingering near the front door of the terminal.

"I want to get to Tannenbaum's store in Neward immediately. I've got to cash a cheque, then come back here to catch a twelve o'clock flight."

A youth looked at his wristwatch and beckoned her toward his cab. "We can make it if you don't take too long in the store."

Izzo was confident that they would make it. This was only a slight difficulty to be overcome, a matter of time and distance. It was not like bearding the Stapps in their den.

She sat with her head against the leather cushions, eyes closed. She thought fleetingly of Grace, gaoled in the car at the terminal. She smiled. This was all blissful. There was an emotional serenity in the speeding taxi.

The taxi driver knew the way. He tried to talk as he drove. Isabelle did not want to talk. She leaned back in comfort and heard highways and roadways moaning underneath the wheels, and opened her eyes only when they reached Tannenbaum's department store.

He would wait. He told her where he'd be. He cautioned her about haste. How different, she thought. What a different version of life is this, from the days when I have come in to select a breadbox or order so many yards of cretonne.

Elevators, the desk, the polished wood and polished eyeglasses. She found the credit manager. She told him it was an emergency, and identified herself, and wrote a three-hundred-dollar cheque.

Almost before she knew it the elevator was sinking beneath her feet and beneath the feet of a dozen other women. They looked at her and wondered about the crisp bills she folded and jammed into her purse. Isabelle laughed in her soul. If they only knew, if they only knew!

Traffic hazards and delays; there had been a minor mishap at one of the traffic bottlenecks. The driver swore. Then once more they were free, and whistling east and south.

Tyres edged against a kerbing. Isabelle and the taxi driver bubbled their mutual congratulations. She paid him, she added fifty cents for the tip; then, before he might display disapproval or shrug a calm philosophy about women and the tips they offered, she had selected another dollar bill and added that to the total. "Thanks, lady." His utterance drifted in farewell behind her as she ran to the door.

They were not in the long ugly lobby. No blue blob, no stringy-haired Ricky in her shabby jacket of rabbit fur.

Oh, not that! No one has come for them—it can't be! The Stapps couldn't have captured them. They didn't know where or how——

Glass doors swung. Isabelle heard the joyful yap of Grace. The three came ecstatically to meet her: Ricky, blanched but beaming, the child staggering beside the dog, the dog hauling at the long, tight leash.

"I thought I'd ought to take her out." Ricky murmured. "She'd been in that car so long."

"Ricky, you're a darling!"

She was more than that, it demonstrated something . . . Izzo had been so right, so right. She had made this investment in the future of her conscience, and already the dividends were accumulating.

Ricky was not merely a brave if ignorant little girl. Potentially she was thoughtful, affectionate. Frankie would be safe in her hands. Isabelle hastened to the counter and flung her purse open.

"But what in the name of . . . you drove to Newark to cash a cheque? Why didn't you ask us, madam? We might have taken a cheque."

Tickets, flimsy little sheets, the carbons underneath, the stapling and marking, Ricky's bag was weighed in its painful lightness, and spirited away by a colored man. Isabelle counted out money: 272.30 dollars.

"Hurry, please! All the other passengers are aboard."

They rushed to the gate. Isabelle had Frankie under her arm; she wondered how that happened. Grace was tangling her leash underfoot.

Izzo took the balance remaining from the three-hundred-dollar cheque and rammed the bills into Ricky's shabby bag. Then Ricky broke down.

"No, no! You mustn't cry. It's just for incidentals. You'll have to take a taxi to your uncle's house. It'll be a long way—miles and miles. It'll be night-time, too, when you get to the Los Angeles municipal airport."

Ricky sobbed. "You're so good! You been so wonderful to me! You're just the best, the best—Oh, gosh!" she wailed. "I don't even know your name."

"Come on, lady!" A man in uniform hurried up. "I'll take the little boy."

Goodbye, goodbye, and I'm so glad you don't know my name. You can never write strange, misspelled letters to me to tell me of the life you lead. Oh, it will be good—there will be happiness for you—I know it, I know it. I've done the best I could. I have given whatever love I possess for my fellow woman — whatever strength I could muster. But I do not seek the disillusionment that might follow in a protracted actuality. Go far away now, piercing the cold sky, and I'll dwell serene because I have seen God if only for an hour or two . . .

Wide propellers blurring, the steps wheeled away, the mechanical movements of men who did last-minute things to the DC-4 and waved it on its lumbering course. Away it lurched, a big stiff fowl, to grow smaller and smaller, to amble, to hop unaccountably, and then at last the blare of departure, the roar and fury overhead.

Isabelle stood and waved. She knew that Ricky was holding little Frankie tightly on her lap; she knew that Ricky had waved a hundred farewells unclimpsed inside that opaque dot of a window. Isabelle watched until the winking object was only a fragment, a pigeon, a bug, a nothingness in the smoky sky.

She went slowly away to wash the tears from her face, to discover with feminine annoyance that she had lost her favorite lipstick.

The badge. She unfastened it from the wallet and wrapped it carefully in its tissue nests. She felt older than any matriarch in accumulated wisdom of experience, but strangely she was light on her feet.

Her conscious mind was light, too. No, not old. Izzo was younger than she had been in years, and proud of herself, and nerved by buoyancy that made her regard the future as a mutalising feast she had never tasted before.

Seventy-five minutes later she sat in an ancient farmhouse distorted into a tea-room, embracing in fact the banquet she had envisioned symbolically.

Home, with its ordered amenities? Izzo was not ready for that yet. She had lived through part of A Day, the stiff brush of melodrama had scrubbed the formal varnish from her spirit.

As she progressed west along the highway where lately she had travelled with Ricky and the rescued child, she recognised signs suggesting the imminence of Middlefield. Promptly she swung away in the right in decided aversion.

An empty house. Ralph busy at the bank. No, she would not return — not until the boy

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covered this escape to the full-est.

Two of the country inns where the Bees sometimes chose to dine on holidays were closed for the winter season, but eventually Isabelle found a rambling corner called Ye Olde Janice Meredith, and that offered comfort.

She parked, she was shown to a wiggly table near a window where she might glimpse the hills and imagine what further adventures were contained within their depths. She ordered Russian borsch, huitres en brochette, enzalada Mexicana. She sat surrounded by British muskets, Swiss cuckoo clocks, and red Bohemian glass tumblers, reviewing the exertion of the morning.

Isabelle was forced to concede it: This fury, attained so unexpectedly, had swollen her desire for activity amid the unfeshed human race and yet had not satisfied it.

She tried to think of Ricky and little Frankie droning suspended through clouds above the Alleghenies. Already the engines had wafted them into a hazy limbo. Already the past was a myth; it lived only when recalled amid the disorder of the future.

To one who has been endured by routine — self-endured — there is an actual wickedness in contemplation of the unique, the bizarre, the purposeless. Isabelle could not voice glee aloud, but there was a giggling in her soul. To spend a day in unearthly ramblings, to devour an unorthodox luncheon in an unfamiliar tavern . . . how strange to savor it, yet how beguiling!

A Day. But what of the night ahead—what of the weeks and years to follow? Her own kitchen, the bedroom she shared with Ralph, and on which she had lavished the affectionate intimacy of quaint little arts; the sewing, the painting, the planning, the revamping of old furniture, and rearranging of new . . .

She loved her furniture even as she loved the sunny breakfast nook and the purity of her well-swept basement, and the shape and texture of the few pieces of Stingel glass she had arranged in the dining-room cupboard.

They were all material appurtenances that marked her wedding to that mundane existence she had embraced and to which she had contributed.

Yet there was a lack. Not love alone; she was happy with Ralph. But Isabelle had met other men in whom she found something to attract her, although her well-ordered disposition blushed to admit it.

There must be something wrong with her, she thought. Ralph was good, he was devoted.

She pleaded guilty to awful disloyalties in even sensing the excitement that was generated by contact with other men, although it had happened only three or four times in her entire married life.

There was that artist; he was the most recent one. His name was LeRoy Perrine, and he lived in a woodland cabin.

Some people in the Middlefield Art Association had said that it was a mere shack, far up in the Watchung Mountains. He was indolent—unsuccessful, not only because of his indolence, but also because of his incapacity—and on top of that he was alleged to be something of a corrupt drunkard.

The evils allegedly practised by LeRoy Perrine had no place in the career of Isabelle Bee, public or private. She was sensible; she could disregard them. She could see an individual as an artist, not solely as a man. She prided herself on that.

Perrine produced small weird canvases. He worked mostly in oil and used a great deal of raw color. Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen, the president of the Middlefield Art Association, intoned with a loud voice that there was much of Rouault in Perrine's painting. She felt that he waited only on discovery of his talents by agents and juries who had thus far been blind to them; and Mrs. Heggen had actually purchased two of the paintings for thirty-five dollars apiece.

The colony where Perrine lived was called Valley Mead, and folks whispered that some of those people at Valley Mead were little better than nudists.

Isabelle had driven up there a time or two with other members of the art association. Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen even went to Valley Mead herself to paint landscapes, but she was sixty-tix years old and above reproach; her chaste spirit and reputation could not be sullied by such contact.

A string of little cottages, some of log, some well painted, others of stone, lay spotted along a back road, and one might see tanned children playing on the paths, and vacant-eyed youths who affected berets, and young women with black-bowed spectacles who were most certainly Communists.

It was one of many poverty-stricken settlements in the New Jersey hills, where the art demonstrated by out-of-work actors or professional leftists who pretended to etch was as stagnant as the bourgeois civilisation they so stridently condemned.

LeRoy Perrine. Why should Isabelle think of him on this unique day? What a degenerate notion—to tantalise herself with the idea of driving to Valley Mead to call upon Perrine!

He liked her well enough, Isabelle was sure of that. On perhaps three occasions during the past year she had encountered LeRoy. There was the annual show, and there had been teas, and even a cocktail party, so called. Mrs. Heggen got it up, and said that she would supply the cocktails.

LeRoy Perrine had been present in a shabby plaid jacket, coolly quoting Jean-Paul Sartre to those who would listen. When he saw Isabelle, his sloping face relaxed into a childish smile, and he gave her hand an extra squeeze.

He said in his bored voice, "Mrs. Bee! How perfectly charming of you to wear that lovely gown of jade. It's the identical color I have been employing in a new little thing I'm doing this week. My dear, it becomes you marvellously! Please wear nothing else each time we meet. Promise?" Isabelle had blushed and promised.

Playing now with her salad, Isabelle found herself actually entertaining the notion of a clandestine trip to Valley Mead.

There was adequate excuse: She was a member of the board of directors of the art association, and there was to be a midwinter exhibit of paintings by artists resident in New Jersey, whose canvases would treat wholly of New Jersey subjects.

She could tell LeRoy Perrine that she had called for the purpose of determining whether or not he might be represented.

She could mention casually to Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen, perhaps the next day, "Oh, Mrs. Heggen, I had an errand in the Valley Mead vicinity, and whom do you think I ran into? LeRoy Perrine. By the way, he says that he would like to hang two small paintings—possibly three——"

There could not possibly be a suggestion of scandal attached to her visit. Yet, considering the naughty plan as it grew by root and tendril, Isabelle felt delicious horror that she had not felt since she and her sister stole cigars out of their father's humidor, when they were fourteen, and smoked them in the bathroom.

Grace snuggled close on the green-painted bench and relaxed with a sigh. The cocker's breath burned warmly through the honest blue serge of Isabelle's skirt, and sank warmly into her flesh.

This was a silent appeal to her senses: the contented nuzzling of the little animal. It served to remind Izzo, too, that Grace was the only visible evidence of her home tie, of her domesticity and saintly wifehood.

HOLIDAY READING

That is, if one excepted the automobile outside, or the clothes that Isabelle wore, the bag she carried—and thus recalled that these had been purchased through the burdensome toil of Ralph Bee.

Was she indeed contemplating nothing wrong? Isabelle tried to probe more deeply into her motives. This all must be a species of rebellion. But why should she wish to practise it, and from what purpose of longing did it stem?

LeRoy Perrine represented something to Isabelle, but she was not quite sure what. In deliberately seeking him through such a spice of mischief, she was nevertheless certain that she did not desire his caresses.

Men were men; of course they all tried. Ralph would probably be shocked to even dream of it. If he knew that one of their very best friends, Horace Applington, had actually dared——

It was when they were all on a picnic at Lake Surprise the previous year — MacDonalds, Pflagers, Applingtons, Corbins, Bees, the whole bunch. It was a beautiful moonlight night. People had gone strolling.

A frog chortled in a little marsh nearby, and Horace Applington was much interested in this frog. Horace was a science teacher in the Middlefield High School and had actually been a member of an expedition to the Galapagos during his college days. He talked learnedly about frogs.

PERHAPS it wasn't only the frogs . . . the moonlight and spring; the rum and Cokes, too.

Suddenly he had cried to Isabelle, "Don't move—no, I mean it! It's just the way you were holding your head—there—while you listened. You're positively beautiful. I'm an old fool—I never realised it before. Isabelle, darling, we could have such a wonderful time together!" And she had let him kiss her—twice.

She broke away from him after a moment, and said, "Horace, really! Don't be absurd," and with her mind positively reeking with thoughts of Sarah Applington. And there were Betty and Brother, serenely asleep at home in their innocent beds, and never dreaming that their father was off in the Watchung woods kissing another woman!

It was the only time Horace had acted that way. He was very much the self-contained pedagogue when next they met at the MacDonalds', and little Sarah had gushed on, relating every detail of Brother's whooping-cough, so of course she never suspected anything.

Isabelle didn't really desire Horace, and would not have permitted herself to be unfaithful to Ralph through deed, word, or thought, even if she had. Marriage was too serious a business for that; at least it should be so regarded.

Most certainly she didn't wish to have LeRoy Perrine kiss her or even touch her. No, something more than that. The savoring of personal gaiety and freedom, perhaps; the yearning for a tenderness of souls that might be realised mutually only by those whose senses reacted to the arts.

She was confident that her senses did react in such fashion, and of course LeRoy Perrine's senses must; otherwise he couldn't paint.

She couldn't paint—that is, nothing except tulips on cupboard doors. Once she had done a lampshade. It wasn't a very good lampshade and Ralph had laughed at it.

And Izzo had done water-colors when she was in high school: apple, asters in a vase. She kept these hoarded in the attic. Sometimes she stopped to open the portfolio and re-examine her girlhood paintings when she was busy in the attic.

Once she even admitted to Ralph that she had a notion to frame a couple of the water-colors and put them up in the living-room.

Ralph had looked vaguely up from his magazine. "The living-room? Why, we've got General Bee in there."

General Bee. Pooh.

That was what she thought. She didn't dare pooh General Bee to Ralph because he would have been both hurt and annoyed.

No, just a meeting, a quiet communion. It would be something that might be managed on a day like this.

What turbulence possessed her? She couldn't imagine herself for one single solitary moment getting boldly into her car, there in their own driveway at Middlefield, leaving her work, getting herself dressed (just as if she were going to a meeting at the church or the Community League), and then motoring sublimely over the hills to Valley Mead—deliberately, that way—starting from home . . .

But the warped colony of cottages lay only a few miles distant from where she now sat politely sipping her cafe Cubana.

She condemned the impulse even while she yielded. Eventually, no matter what rational discussion Isabelle wasted upon herself, she would be driving with intent amid the twisting roads. At times she would be restrained by convention — parking unaccountably by the roadside, nervously lighting a limp cigarette from which tobacco grains sifted because she had squeezed it so hard in extracting it from her cigarette case.

She would pause, and smile guiltily, and accuse herself as an idiot. Always she would switch on the ignition and slide the lever into gear again.

She would proceed to her illicit destination: the roof-tree of LeRoy Perrine, the rustic hub of his artistic enterprise, and of whatever enterprise he might in due course suggest to her.

. . . . . .

Even while Isabelle's tea-room fork explored the substance of toasted oysters, her dazed husband was wandering in the rearmost woodlands of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Ralph Bee had stepped at last from labyrinthian bushes bled by February, where he had pondered and shuddered, awaiting the regaining of his equilibrium.

He was still confused and frightened, but, putting on a bold front, he strode a paved road beneath the arch of leafless maples.

He walked steadily, stiff-nerved by cruel exhilaration, amazed at finding any identifiable satisfaction in the sordid things, the violent things he had seen and heard, but still feeling a pleasure strongly.

Once more he did not know where he was going, once more he did not care. Eventually a car sounded from behind him. Ralph looked around to observe the machine bearing down, seeming to travel in a dangerously erratic fashion.

It was a medium-sized blue sedan, fairly new. It veered to the extreme left-hand side of the road and swerved sharply toward the middle again. Ralph stood waiting for the car to pass, wondering at this strange behaviour.

The sedan drifted by. The driver, a man in his forties, was bent to one side. He had no hat and he was driving with only one hand on the wheel.

Warning lights bloomed red as the driver put his foot on the brake. Ralph thought that the man was going to stop to pick him up, and he quickened his steps. But in another moment the car started up again and went out of sight around the next curve.

When Ralph Bee reached the curve and had a clear view of the road beyond it, he saw that the sedan was halted properly this time, at the right side of the road, and the man who had driven it was walking back and forth beside the car.

He was swinging his arms crazily, fairly wringing his hands; then he bent forward, doubled up, holding his hands against his middle.

Ralph began to run. When he reached the car the man was leaning against the rear door. He was smaller than Ralph, with a grey, pinched face.

"What's the matter?"

"I'm sick."

Ralph put his arm around the fellow and stood supporting him. "You're in great pain," and that was an understatement of the agony that this man seemed to be suffering.

"It's my stomach. Here."

"Have you ever had an attack of appendicitis?"

The man gasped, "Never scarcely sick a day in my life. This is killing me! I didn't feel too well the last hour or so . . . got off on the wrong road . . . I can't drive. . . ."

Ralph said, "I've got to get you to a doctor. Which way is the next town?"

The man opened his eyes widely. Despite all his misery, his glance seemed charged with suspicion. "Don't you live around here?"

"No." Ralph lied. "My own car broke down and I was trying to get to a telephone."

The other man groaned. "We can't be very far from Norristown. Take me to Norristown."

Ralph helped him into the car, climbed in after him, and started the engine. He was apprehensive lest this agonised stranger should die there beside him.

Ralph drove rapidly through the curving countryside. Less than two miles away they came to a main thoroughfare. There was a sign pointing the way to Norristown, and Ralph increased his speed, using the horn generously in order to speed past slower traffic.

He hoped to see a policeman, but recalled guiltily that all the police and troopers in the area were probably now otherwise engaged.

His companion felt better for a few moments, and they exchanged names. The man said that his name was Hodges, and that he was en route to Philadelphia when he suffered the attack. Pain overwhelmed him again; he closed his eyes and endured.

At the edge of Norristown, Ralph whizzed into a garage. Attendants turned in surprise from their work on another car.

"I've got a sick man here. Where's a good doctor?"

They directed him to the office of a Dr. Musselman, and Ralph found the place without too much trouble. There was a fire hydrant and a "No Parking" sign on the kerb directly in front of the office, and into this space Ralph eased the car.

Hodges sat up and looked around. "Better not park here."

"This is an emergency. I can move it later."

"I don't want to get a ticket," moaned Hodges. For one suffering such torment, he seemed desperately concerned with this business of a possible traffic violation, and Ralph fairly dragged him from the car.

Hodges protested, then acquiesced. "But be sure you lock it. I've got some—some valuable stuff in there. Here, use the same key you used for the ignition. That's right." He pulled the keys from Ralph's hand and thrust them into his own pocket.

Ralph aided Hodges up a stairway. There were faces in the reception room: women, children, one old man, all staring curiously as they lowered their magazines. A little yellow-haired nurse came out.

"This gentleman is very ill. It's an emergency."

"I'll tell the doctor. Here, come through this door," and she took Ralph's charge away from him, and the door was closed.

Ralph Bee sat perhaps ten minutes. He tried to think of home, of the work-life he had left, the people there. His hold on his previous existence was attenuated. His arm went out, longer and longer; it stretched to the length and the thinness of a spool of threadlike silver wire.

The little silver wire of his arm went out of the doctor's office; along the road where Hodges had collapsed and where they had met; through the timberland of winter-dried trees; through the dirty roadhouse, with pistol shots puncturing the air; far through the Hartnett house, and reached the Delaware River and over the fields of New Jersey to his home, and the life even beyond that . . .

"Your friend wants to see you."

It was the nurse. She escorted him into a room beyond.

Hodges was half lying on an examination table. "You guessed good," said the patient. "Doctor says it's appendicitis beyond a doubt. He gave me a shot. I feel a little better."

"I'm glad of that," said Ralph warmly. "You had quite a bad time out there on the road."

"Sure did. Lucky for me your car broke down. What did you say your name was again?"

"Bee. Ralph R. Bee."

Mr. Hodges seemed to meditate about something not immediately related to the pain in his body. "Look here, can you tell me a little more about yourself? I am about to ask a big favor."

Before Ralph could reply, the man said (and all the time the nurse was close; Ralph could hear the starched rustle of her uniform as she moved), "They're going to operate immediately. Doc's calling the hospital. They'll take me over there in an ambulance. He doesn't want me to walk any more than I have to. Mr. Bee, are you afraid of The Dead?"

Indeed he was. He was terrified even now at the recollection of Myonko smashing that table and chair, and remembering how Freddy Dutcher's feet looked, turned sideways, both of them tilted toward the left as he lay upon his back, and no man alive could hold his feet like that. . . .

Ralph coughed. "What do you mean—afraid of The Dead? I've never met—" He tittered. "I haven't seen many dead people."

The nurse said brightly. "There, there, Mr. Hodges, you be a good boy! You're not going to die. You'll have that mean old appendix out and—"

Hodges raised himself into more of a sitting position and held out his hand. "Mr. Bee, let me look at your wallet a minute, will you? Man's wallet always tells a lot about him. I ought to know—people are always bringing wallets to me aboard. They leave them around—" He checked himself abruptly.

Wondering, but still obeying the peculiar request, Ralph pulled out the old alligator-hide pocketbook that had been

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a Christmas present from Izzo in 1939.

Cards, little colored scraps of his identity; he had not realised how many there were before Hodges boldly began to finger through them.

There were the driver's licence, the Legion and lodge cards, the card from the bank, and there was the identification from his automobile insurance company, and the card that saluted him as a member of the Boy Scout Council in the town of Middlefield.

"That's good enough for me," said Hodges. He managed a sour smile. "A Boy Scout card. I hadn't expected to find that. Have you done your good deed for the day, Mr. Bee?"

"Yes!" Ralph reacted without resentment, but he was thinking of Leila Hartnett.

"Don't get sore," said Hodges rapidly. "It's like this: Ashes—a dead person's ashes—would that bother you?"

"I don't know. I've never seen any."

"You don't have to see them. They're in a little urn—a box with handles. It's locked in the trunk of my car. What happened was this: My mother died last autumn in Hawaii. She had been there for many years. I work on board a ship and I'm out of the country most of the time. But a while back we put in at Honolulu, and I picked up Mother's ashes. We figured on holding a service in Philadelphia, where she used to live."

Despite the narcotic, a spasm of pain tore him. Hodges gritted his teeth but went on speaking.

"What happened was this: I was driving down here with Mother's ashes, taking them to Philadelphia. It seemed like the simplest way to do, and less expensive, because nobody knew the date in advance, or what undertaker to have or anything—it was all mixed up. Anyway, those ashes are in the trunk of my car, and the service is supposed to be in Philadelphia pretty quick."

Ralph inquired sympathetically. "You mean within a few days?"

"No. Right now—this afternoon. I had some errands to do, so I took longer than I had thought. Whether or not they delay the service now—well, that doesn't matter. But I can't leave Mother's ashes in a garage or on a parking lot somewhere for days and days, maybe weeks. If you'll be good enough to drive my car and take those ashes on to the address I give you, my folks will be glad to compensate you for your time and trouble."

The nurse began, "Mr. Hodges, you could probably hire a taxi or—"

The man shook his head sternly. "Would you do that with your mother's ashes? It's a personal matter—somebody you'd have to trust—"

Ralph Bee said, "I—I appreciate your feeling on the matter. I'll be happy to give you any help I can."

Dr. Musselman opened the door. "The patient can get ready now. They'll come after him in a few minutes."

"Just one phone call, Doctor," Hodges begged. "I've got to make that!"

The doctor shrugged. "Reach that phone over to him, Miss Hurst. But don't take too long, brother. We've got to get you to the hospital."

Hodges appealed to them, "Would you mind? Just one minute—it's very personal—"

The doctor had already departed and closed the door, so Ralph and the nurse went into the doctor's office, after she had given Hodges the phone.

They could hear the mumble of his voice talking on the telephone. After another few minutes he called in weakness, "All right, folks. Thanks a lot," and they returned.

Hodges gave over his car keys to Ralph and handed him a business card. It read, "Interocean Shipping and Transport Service." Down in one corner was "M. B. Hodges, Purser. S.S. Poltuna."

On this card Hodges had scrawled, "Agnes C. Klevering, Molesworth Manor Apartments," with the address.

"They're waiting for you," he said to Ralph. "My nephew assures me that everybody will be very grateful. They may or may not delay the service until I'm able to attend. Mr. Bee, my relatives will be glad to make up to you—time lost, or anything like that. They'll provide a taxi for you to go back up there where you left your car."

He swung his legs around and sat up painfully on the edge of the table. "Lucky for me! I guess anybody on a Boy Scout council can be trusted." He sighed as if he had slipped a load from his shoulders.

Ralph said, "Good luck to you with the operation." Hodges shook his hand, and Hodges' own hand was damp with perspiration and seemed to tremble inside its skin.

Ralph Bee went down into the street. An ambulance was double parked beside the green sedan and a policeman was engaged in writing out a ticket. Hurriedly Ralph explained the circumstances, and the officer, glancing at the doctor's sign and then at the ambulance, reluctantly tore up the ticket.

Trying one key after another, Ralph Bee unlocked the boot of the sedan. There was a suitcase and also a cubical parcel, not at all frightening. The parcel was wrapped in heavy paper and had a little sticker fastened on the paper: "Elizabeth Dale Engelbrecht, 1878—1951."

Ralph shuddered. It was more or less a reflex; he felt no actual fear of that parcel. He closed the trunk, got into the car, and drove on into Philadelphia. It was only about fifteen miles.

The address furnished by Hodges was in a portion of the city unfamiliar to Ralph, and he was not prepared for the dingy, ivory-lacquered porticos of an apartment building like the Molesworth Manor. He found it in a side street opposite a small park, after halting to ask for directions.

As he drove slowly past the building, checking the street number and scouting for a place to park, he saw a round-cheeked young man in a grey suit strolling up and down in front of the building.

When Ralph stopped the car, the man hastened toward him.

"Excuse me," he called through the window.

Ralph reached over and cranked the glass down.

"Are you the fellow who just drove in from Norristown?"

Ralph lowered his voice out of respect to that dreary shipment in the trunk. "I'm the man. Are you—" he looked at the card he had ready in his hand "—Mr. Klevering?"

There was something about this young man that Ralph did not like at all. He had never been fond of brisk, bulbous-eyed people with only the thinnest of pink fuzzes on their scalps; he had not liked people with cold, puffy eyes, or with little, round, fat mouths like some sort of fish in a tropical aquarium. And this man embodied all those disagreeable features.

Rigorously he tried to discipline himself into pity. After all, distasteful, avaricious, and pompous as his face declared him to be, still this young man had suffered a bereavement; he was one of the mourners.

The man said, "No. Mrs. Klevering is upstairs with—with the others. I'll take the ashes up." He added lamely, "Oh, my name's Austin."

STRANGE DAY

"Bee," said Ralph. "Glad to meet you."

Austin asked, "Where are they—in the car trunk? If you'll just tell me how much we owe you, I'll be glad to—"

Ralph felt at a loss. As a matter of fact, he had not considered what compensation or adjustment should be made to him. He said, "Well, I don't know. I don't know how much to say, if anything. You'd better get them out first."

He got out and opened the trunk, and he and Austin stood regarding the wrapped chunk and the suitcase beside it.

Ralph said, "That suitcase belongs to Mr. Hodges, apparently. What a fool I am! I didn't leave it there for him. He'll need things in the hospital. You know—toilet articles and——"

Mr. Austin grunted. His pale eyes blinked and winked. "Probably Hodges"—it was peculiar; he didn't call him Uncle Marty or Uncle Millard, he just said Hodges—"was so rattled he forgot to have you take his suitcase out of the car. No matter—some of us can take it up there to him to-night. Now, Mr. Bee, if you'll just excuse me——"

He dragged the receptacle forward. It was heavy but it was small, and Austin had no difficulty in lifting the container. He hesitated, then placed the burden on the floor of the boot and straightened up.

Ralph said, "I'd be glad to help you with that."

AUSTIN shook his head. "Entirely unnecessary. I'm not a cripple. But thank you just the same." He reached into his pocket and brought out a fold of bills. "If you'll just tell me how much we owe you——"

Ralph said curtly, "There'll be no charge."

Austin regarded him with genuine astonishment. Ralph surmised that here was a man who reckoned cost against commodity in every act he performed.

"I was merely doing Mr. Hodges a kindness," said Ralph. "I wasn't thinking about compensation."

"Do you know what I think about you?" asked Austin coarsely. "I think you're a fool, like you said a minute ago. I agree with you, Mr. Bee. You are a fool! You could have made fifty dollars on this deal."

He said no more, but lifted the container, holding it by two metal handles protruding on either side at the top, also wrapped in paper. He went away, pressing the burden against his thick stomach, disappearing into the building without a backward glance.

Ralph thought One of those people always waiting to inherit something! I bet he could scarcely wait for his grandmother to die!

At least he had the comfortable satisfaction attendant after a favor generously given. He closed up the car boot and walked toward the nearest intersection.

Austin was right: He was an idiot. Here he travelled with only some twenty-seven dollars in his pocket, patrolling the streets of a strange city, unambitious, not knowing where his next twenty-seven dollars were coming from, apparently not caring . . .

He had strolled some blocks farther along, well past the windy sward of the park, when he thought of enjoying a cigarette. Ralph slid his hand into his pocket, hunting for matches. His fingers touched the familiar little wad of his own key container . . . but what was this?

He had forgotten to give the car keys to Mr. Austin—the keys to Hodges' car! Austin hadn't even asked for them. He had dashed into the building with that urn, with only his nasty remark to Ralph as farewell. He had not asked about the car or the keys or—Well, there was nothing for it but to return and give up the keys, much as Ralph disliked the prospect of facing Austin again.

The traffic light was against him at the main intersection. It must have been at least twenty minutes after he first left the Molesworth Manor when he found himself within the vestibule, hunting for the name of Klevering.

He found the card, "Agnes C. Klevering," and pressed the bell beside it marked 4G. He rang two or three times but there came no answer. Ralph thought of dropping the keys into the mailbox, but the slot was too narrow.

Probably the bell wasn't working. He tried the inner door of the vestibule and found that it was not locked. There was a little automatic elevator, and Ralph rode slowly up to the fourth floor.

He was disgusted with himself for this act of absent-mindedness. Austin would be just the sort to misconstrue it. He would think that Ralph had reconsidered, and was now hinting for a cash donation. But sincerity drove him on.

He prowled dusky corridors and found the door marked 4G down a blind alley at the extreme right. Ralph could see no doorbell in that gloom, only the burnished numerals shining on the panel. He rapped discreetly, apologetically, with his knuckles.

The door flew open immediately after his rap. Ralph gulped. There were two men inside, both taller than he, both looking down at him. The apartment behind them was very bright, for the sun shone at this hour on that side of the building, and Ralph had difficulty in adjusting his eyes after his search through the dim hall.

He stared up at the men.

"What do you want"

"I'm looking for Mr. Austin."

One of the men was tall and narrow-shouldered with a pale, drawn face. The other was burly and had a close-clipped black moustache.

The man said, "Mr. Austin isn't home."

Ralph looked at them in bewilderment. "But surely — is this Mrs. Klevering's apartment?"

"Correct," said the tall young man with the hard eyes.

The shorter man broke in. "Look, Perry, it's the guy who drove the car from Norristown," and then Ralph received the shock of his life.

The men reached out and dragged him into Apartment 4G. Quickly the door was shut and bolted. The man with the moustache bent close to Ralph. "All right, you asked for it. Don't let me hear anything out of you, or I'll wrap a lamp around your skull!"

At the very moment when Ralph found himself thus painfully imperilled, his lovely wife was coming close to danger of quite another sort.

Around a curve on the Quarry Hill Road, whither she had strayed after alarums and hesitations, she overtook the object of her interest, Mr. LeRoy Perrine. He wore an old jacket and was bareheaded to the whim of February breezes.

LeRoy carried what appeared to be a carved ebony stick, and was in fact a sword-cane acquired by him in a happier decade while he was still engaged in squandering the last remnants of a meagre Indianapolis inheritance.

He had purchased the weapon in a Mexican shop, and it had comforted him ever since. At mere consideration of the steel blade encased within that innocent wood, he was reassured whenever he strolled alone. (LeRoy was eternally beset by nightmares in which surly bloodhounds, maniacal thugs, and hard-hearted creditors threatened him.)

When Isabelle first spied him plodding along a shoulder of the road, he was wielding the cane viciously on winter-dried reeds in his path. Mr. Perrine was sulky at the moment, but his annoyance vanished when the bright little car glided to a halt beside him.

Greetings between himself and the friendly Mrs. Bee were enthusiastic. LeRoy had had his eye upon Izzo for some time, being moved especially by casual information furnished by Middlefield acquaintance.

He had been informed that Mrs. Bee's husband was a banker. The people who told him had not said, "Ralph Bee is an assistant supervisor of tellers." They had said merely, "He's a banker."

As for Isabelle, she was so relieved at being spared the embarrassment attendant upon a deliberate invasion of Valley Mead that she could have squealed for joy.

LeRoy reached through the window and took her hand. He might have kissed it but Grace got in the way, seeking caresses. Mr. Perrine didn't care for dogs, but now he wiggled stubby fingers in Grace's hair and uttered baby talk.

"How fortunate," he cried to Isabelle, "that I chose the Quarry Hill Road for my stroll to-day — never dreaming that I'd meet you! I had some thought of going through the woods over south-east—perhaps all the way to Freedom Hill and Free Acres—but my feet took me this way. There was a good fairy mixed up in the choice, somehow or other!" and he wiggled his eyebrows.

It might never be common knowledge, but most certainly it was a fact that LeRoy Perrine had walked all the way to the home of a retired engineer—a middle-aged bachelor whom LeRoy had known for some time. From this man Perrine had managed to secure small loans when his purse was especially flat, and thus he had strolled the hills to-day, planning to call on Eddie Dear Boy, trusting that he might secure further endowment.

In this he was disappointed. Eddie Dear Boy, quailing before the protraction of winter, had packed up securely and gone to Orlando, Florida. He had not informed LeRoy of his plans, fearing that LeRoy might wish to accompany him on the southward trip, and at Eddie Dear Boy's expense.

LeRoy was heartsick at finding the bungalow closed for the season. His hopes of financial assistance thus evaporating clammily, the punishment he visited upon unoffending wayside weeds is understandable.

He told Isabelle, "Oh, I don't know . . . it's easy enough for people to respond to the out-of-doors—in June, shall we say? Or perhaps when the hills have gone crazy with October? But a day like this . . . no hint of spring except in one's imaginings. It builds a beauty all about. One must go abroad to taste it."

Isabelle nodded. She was positive that he sounded exactly like Noel Coward. "I know," she said prettily. "That's the reason I went for a drive."

"I think I told you," cried LeRoy, shocked to the quick, "that you should never—positively never—visit these hills without also visiting me. My word! I put you on your honor. Or have you forgotten?"

Flushed and laughing, Isabelle accepted his banter and responded. Her heart was beating rapidly.

In masterful manner he opened the door, climbed in beside Izzo, and saw to it that the cocker was relegated to the rear seat.

"You must come with me. Tut-tut—I refuse to accept any excuses. It's less than a mile from here. You'll turn down the lane to the left, after you pass that next big white barn. See? Where the poplar trees are."

"But I ought to go home."

"Why should you go home at this unseemly hour? To be domestic? To prepare dinner for your husband?" Somehow he managed to convey the impression that preparing dinner for Ralph was the meanest of chores. "Why, my dear girl, he can't possibly be home for hours and hours! Come—drive me over to my cottage and I'll fix tea or anything you like."

Thus Isabelle permitted herself to yield, and thus she drove. Mr. Perrine was feeling very much pleased with himself, and so was Isabelle pleased with herself.

It wasn't much, he said, just a rude little shack, really—a studio cottage. An ill-favored thing, but his own. No, he didn't own it truly; it belonged to the Zinsmasters. Oh, you, of course, she must know who the Zinsmasters were — Chloe and Zinny. They lived over near Westfield.

LeRoy had—well, a personal arrangement with them. He'd had the cottage for three years now. And how fortunate he was to get it! Did Isabelle really mean that she didn't know Chloe?

Oh, she'd just met her at the art association a time or two. Yes, Chloe etched a little. That was the reason they'd built the cottage at Valley Mead originally—a studio retreat. But Chloe had done so badly with her etching that she'd practically given up her career. So she'd gone to Arizona for the winter.

Zinny was in the perfume business—doing rather too well. But they were really perfect darlings to let LeRoy have the cottage—and for a song.

The special exhibition of New Jersey subjects, by artists resident in New Jersey? Oh, yes, he'd already heard about that. Mrs. Heggen told him. Poor old Lily Winterset! (He laughed musically. And the landscapes . . . my dear, what landscapes! But, after all, she really was a darling . . . Let's see: There might be some things that he could let them have for the show.

For instance, there was his "Pulaski Skyway." Mrs. Heggen owned that; she might loan it. And then his series, "Forgotten Ambushes." They were quite objective, really. That is, subjective in conception, but more or less objective in their treatment. "Forgotten Ambush Number Four." He'd never really finished that. Something about the grouping in the foreground never satisfied him completely.

But he could say that it was in New Jersey, and no one would know the difference. Ha-ha. . . .

The arrival at Mr. Perrine's dwelling, a peach-tinted cottage rooted amid sooty trunks of trees, was marred by an encounter with Chauncey, Mr. Perrine's cat. This beast looked nearly as large as Grace, and was replete with handsome tiger stripes, an exceptionally long tail, and a rattlesnake head.

Chauncey awaited his master on the steps, and Grace was delighted the moment she glimpsed him. Grace had a fondness for cats in her own neighborhood. She was on affectionate terms with all of them.

Grace's heart was warm and her intentions of the best as she rioted toward the door. There was a snarl from Chauncey, a shriek from the cocker. The humans flew to the rescue. The combatants were separated. Grace had received a scratch more ruinous to her high regard for cat nature than to her exquisitive nose.

"Chauncey," wailed LeRoy, "you vile creature! How dare you greet a guest in such fashion! And this poor little thing—what is her name, my

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4381682

Gladys? Poor little Gladys—"

"It's Grace," said Izzo. "I'd better put her back in the car." Under she lugged the dog with soothing words, with dabbing the aid for Grace's injured paw.

LeRoy, having banished Chauncey to the cabin's interior, sped to the injured caller bearing a package of cocktail tender that he dignified by the term of biscuits.

He hoped that Grace would enjoy these Krinklee Krunchies. They would enable her, he cried, to forget the painful experience. Lavishly he strewed the oily yellow morsels on the upholstery. Then he escorted Isabelle within doors.

Whatever trepidation Mrs. Bee felt on entering the lair of this celebrity was overcome immediately by her joy at standing at last within the precincts of bona fide art.

There was a north light somewhat concealed by cobwebs, but still the bare black beams could be seen above and beyond. There was a fireplace of coarse grey stone, comforting and warm, though the fire lately contained therein had burned to chunks.

There were easels, crammed bookshelves, and a wide couch against the wall opposite the fireplace—a divan of stained velvet. On every table top abounded tubes of oil paint, or containers containing either turpentine and brushes or cigarette butts decaying amid the dregs of leftover potations.

Isabelle would never have countenanced this mess in her own living-room, but to LeRoy Perrine's cabin the litter imparted an aura beyond description.

He crouched at the fireplace with wadded newspapers and kindling. "Ah, yes. We'll need to build the fire up. It's cooler and cooler outside," and he presented Isabelle with a gigantic match.

There was a peculiar beauty about this match: It was as long as a knitting needle, headed with a jewel of orchid sulphur or phosphorus or whatever they made matches out of.

"You," he cried, "shall light the fire! I'm superstitious about fires. I regard them symbolically," and he laughed again and denuded Isabelle of her coat. He carried away her hat, her gloves, her bag into his small bedroom adjoining.

Izzo's hands shook. She broke the long match against the stone. "Oh, you do it! Please, Mr. Perrine!"

"Please — LeRoy!" he corrected her archly.

"Please, LeRoy. I'm so clumsy," and she wondered that he did not hear her heart thumping as he knelt close beside her.

"Heavens! We mustn't touch that match, must we? It would be a surrender to the Fates!" Then, when he had bent forward with a cigarette lighter in his hand, the smouldering paper and kindling burst into flame of their own accord, stirred to activity by old coals underneath.

"Gremlins," diagnosed LeRoy knowingly. Isabelle felt a delightful, nearly alcoholic unsteadiness as she witnessed his expertise. So like a little boy.

So, he wasn't actually handsome. In all her shy regard for Mr. Perrine's person and accomplishments, she had not thought of him as handsome. He was barely taller than Izzo herself, and he seemed even balder than the last time she saw him.

His sloping forehead rose sublimely into a knoll of tanned scalp to which only the scrubbiest auburn fuzz still clung. The rest of his hair, matted above ears and neck, was too long. Some horrid people might even have called it unkempt.

Still, he was an artist — the only consummate artist Izzo knew. She must not forget that. She must not forget the clear, sensitive soul that dwelled inside a somewhat grotesque body and polished the very eyes from which it peeped.

They were large eyes, a little too puffy, suggesting a thyroid out of order, to any knowledgeable doctor. But just now they suggested only eagerness and a brightly awake spirituality to Isabelle Bee.

LeRoy flew about to make her comfortable. He ordered Chauncey off the couch. No, no, she must sit over here where she could watch the flames in the fireplace; and he, Perrine, would sit where he could watch her.

Color warmed Isabelle's face—perhaps a ruddiness from the flames, though surely the blaze hadn't grown that large so soon, with only two small logs added to the burning twigs.

Her hand slid out. A low table stood near the end of the couch, and Isabelle selected a paper-weight. She lifted it for examination, she delighted in a crimson poppy twisting its petals within the crystal richness.

Soft and reassuring, yet a stimulant, Perrine's voice came through the buzzing in her ears. "I'm so glad you like that! It was a gift from a friend during the war—a padre in a small French village. He loved those things as I do—as you do."

She heard herself crying politely, "I didn't know you were in the war."

"Oh, of course," he said lightly. "Wasn't everyone?"

"My husband was. Of course he didn't get out of the United States. Were you in the Navy or——"

"Heavens, no! My work was a little off the beaten track. I was under SHAEF. They seemed to feel—I don't know, perhaps it was my command of other languages—French, principally—that caused them to select me for a rather peculiar assignment. I was lucky. No Purple Hearts, no PW camps—"

"My! I suppose you were decorated and everything."

"Oh, yes. Wasn't everyone?" He laughed easily.

To Isabelle's credulous ears, LeRoy's scanty reference to his military career suggested submarine missions along a hostile coast, hazardous parachute drops for assisting the Maquis. Emphatically this was just the impression Mr. Perrine intended to convey.

His service abroad had been performed during the last five months of the conflict, when he served as an insignificant officer in the structure of public relations at Paris, in an office at the Scribe Hotel. There he won grudging admiration from his superiors because of a sly ability to procure the perfume and cologne desired by visiting Congressmen, and there he incurred the ungrudging enmity of every war correspondent who dealt with him.

His decoration was a chairborne Bronze Star, awarded in that period when sedentary personnel scornfully referred to such canonisation as the awarding of the E.T.O. Good Conduct Ribbon.

Isabelle closed her eyes to dispel a hideous picture of LeRoy, blindfolded but jaunty to the last, facing a squad of helmeted Nazi executioners.

How fortunate that he had been saved! He must have been spared for a stupendous purpose, perhaps for work nobler than any he had yet exhibited.

"What will you drink?"

"Oh, nothing, thank you. It's too early yet. Usually we just have a cocktail or two before dinner."

"Possibly some sherry?"

"No, thank you," said Isabelle decisively.

"Very well, I shall wait also."

LeRoy was vastly relieved. To-day his cellar stood in a depleted condition. He owned exactly one inch of good Scotch in a decanter, about three-quarters of an inch of blended bourbon in a pint bottle, half a bottle of cloying maraschino liqueur,

HOLIDAY READING

and half a gallon of California port in a hideous glass jug.

"I refuse to drink alone. We'll wait until the fire has burned down a bit and then—then I'll mull some wine."

"You'll—mull?"

"Haven't you ever tasted mulled wine, Isabelle?" He stroked her name lightly, casually, but with affection. She trembled at hearing him speak the syllables.

"I don't think so. Ralph and I aren't very sophisticated about wine." Some warning impulse suggested that she invoke the spectre of Ralph at this point. "Is it important?"

He laughed gaily. He called her a darling. She must wait a while. Then she would see what miracles he might perform with spices, with a white-hot poker.

Isabelle was trying to retain the last shreds of Middlefield dignity, and that was difficult to do, since the couch cushions were a good four feet away from her back, and she had either to sit bolt upright on the edge of this velvet platform or else curl with an abandon that suggested complete surrender.

LeRoy did not appear to notice her dilemma. If he thought her gauche or frightened, he was far too much of a gentleman to suggest such awareness. There he sat in a yellow-and-green shirt, crouched on a polished tree stump near the fireplace, flames snapping behind him.

"LEROY said simply, "I'm so glad you've come at last."

"Maybe I shouldn't have come. But I did want to see your paintings."

"And you shall see them. And I want to exhibit all my little treasures." He indicated the paperweight again.

He had stolen it out of an ugly German china closet while on a visit to the Weimar press camp that constituted Captain Perrine's sole approach into former enemy territory.

He had some old silver, too. He knew she'd love that. A few odds and ends of pewter, charming things he'd picked up here and there . . . the little things. Although LeRoy didn't believe that physical appurtenances really made the best of our lives, and of course Isabelle didn't either. Hasty moments in living: a touch, a word . . .

He bounced up off the stump. "I'll show you the work I'm doing now. You asked for it!" He sped to an easel that had been turned away in the corner, and lifted a canvas not more than thirty inches long, and brought it to her tenderly.

"Sit right where you are. I know the light in this room so well. Here now—over here. Let me tilt it slightly. Is that better?"

Isabelle had never before glimpsed a painting in progress, by a genuine artist, with gobs of fresh unhardened color still creamy on the canvas. She stared in rapture at such novelty, although she was not quite sure just what this unsung master of the modern age might be attempting to depict.

She felt very stupid—unsharpened, dull, unaware. Stiff little figures, mere posts of men and women and children, abounded all over the painting. Assuredly it was a riot of color. Perhaps a veritable riot was occurring in the narrative and message that the creator related.

"It—it—" By good fortune Izzo could remember what Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen had said not long before; she could take issue with Mrs. Heggen. "I don't care," she cried, "what Mrs. Heggen said! It's not Rouault. There's not a bit of Rouault in your painting. You paint like—like you."

LeRoy smiled cryptically at his canvas and then at Isabelle.

"Thank you *for* saying that. No, of course not—never Rouault. Perhaps—well, I really don't know of any contemporary. I've been told that I'm like Braque, rather. At least we're both capable of the same spreading movement — you know, complete extension of activity. It has its instigation within the physical limits of the canvas, but of course it progresses far beyond."

He continued, "Oh, yes. And some say there's a resemblance to Paul Klee, although I don't accept that—not for one moment."

Isabelle tried to think of the pile of art magazines that she treasured on the lower shelf of her sewing table at home, but the names of artists, the colored covers, the very content of the articles and exhibitions they discussed—these were a hodge-podge.

She whinnied, "My friend and neighbor Mrs. Pflager—she has some very interesting things in her living-room and hall. They're reproductions, of course. She's got Grant Wood's 'Woman with Plant' and something of Thomas Hart Benton's."

LeRoy shrank from the very thought. "Wood and Benton! Oh, my dear, not really? And in reproduction, too. How utterly ghastly!"

"But they're not like your work at all. You have something else — a kind of — it's fresh and—and uncontrollable—"

"I love you for saying that." LeRoy spoke almost too warmly. He had moved to one side, holding the canvas for Isabelle's delectation, and his knee now encountered the high heel of her shoe. Izzo was impelled to draw her foot away.

"Uncontrollable! No one's ever said that before. And yet—well, I hope it's true. I pray it's true. If only this fermentation in my consciousness can extend on and on and on. . . . You do follow me, my dear?"

"Of course," said Isabelle feebly.

"Do you know what I shall call this painting? You can't guess! It marks a revolution, really. A departure into the world of objectivity."

Certainly there seemed to be a battle in progress, created amid the cerulean, mustard, and mauve smears. A battle. The only name that could come to Isabelle's mind was "Armageddon." She hesitated to say that, though she found her lips shaping the word.

"This," LeRoy said with hushed simplicity, "is 'Prokofiev at Sevastopol.'"

Isabelle felt her brow wrinkling and her brain as well. "I didn't know he was there," she faltered. Her sole acquaintance with the works of Prokofiev was constituted in "Peter and the Wolf," which she had played with high success for her two small nephews when they visited in Middlefield.

"You see, my dear, Prokofiev wrote the Alexander Nevsky suite. And that was a battle, too—a stalwart defence by the Russians against invading Teutonic hordes. Of course it all happened in the thirteenth century. You remember?"

He sank down beside her on the couch. "It was Novgorod in those days, instead of Sevastopol, but Nevsky met them at Lake Chud, near Pskov, and routed them with terrible slaughter! Oh, yes, seven hundred years. But history repeated itself, didn't it? And in our time. And Prokofiev sang his heroic battle song so magnificently that I felt he had a tribute coming to him.

"Of course, it's not finished yet. From left to right, you see, the painting mirrors the seven phases of the original cantata. I may be criticised for suggesting that there were seven phases in the defence of Sevastopol, but that's not the point."

Isabelle sipped at his words. They were flowing past her in a golden stream; she could taste only a few. She thought again of "Peter and the Wolf," and tried to echo in her mind the motif suggesting a runaway child dancing into a woodland to encounter ferocious animals. She could almost hear the orchestra; she could almost hear Dr. Damrosch's voice reciting the tale across the ether.

She thought of poor Ralph. His musical erudition reached as far as "The Flight of the Bumblebee." He knew that; he could whistle a few bars of it, and sometimes pretended to be a bumblebee when he was in the shower.

There had been a junket to New York concert halls, promulgated by the Music Department of the Woman's Club during a past season. Middlefield was too close to the metropolis to make local concerts a success, but a block of seats had been arranged for, at performances of the Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Symphony, a Burl Ives evening, and several other assorted events.

Tickets had been sold by the Woman's Club members. Posters had been put up at strategic places, advertising these forays into the resounding world of Manhattan music. "Join the Junket," the poster said at the top. And across the bottom, "Junket is nice!"

Ralph scorned the posters. He said they were silly. But under Izzo's persuasion the Bees bought their tickets, and they attended on each occasion, and still Ralph could recognise offhand only the two numbers for which he seemed to have an entomological affinity: "The Flight of the Bumblebee" and "The Blue Tail Fly."

How different from the rest of her world and the whole conduct of Isabelle's past! How throbbing, how titillating! Flames exalting beneath the grainy grey rocks, the afternoon wind outside, and Perrine's masterpiece fresh and candied with its ribbons of paint . . . and Perrine himself saying these things to her, to her alone, because he knew that she would understand.

So cosy, so beguiling in a following hour, when little jugs stood hot upon the hearth. Beer mugs, they were, of thick grey-green pottery. The poker came out of the blaze, drawn with care by LeRoy, his convex forehead seamed with concentration. The poker came out not exactly white-hot but at least pink, and with only a modest amount of soot clinging to it. It was plunged in turn into the bath of port in each mug. Sizzling filled the room, steam flowered up, the scorched breath of powdered cinnamon drifted abroad.

Isabelle drank and wondered and drank again.

"You like it?" Perrine inquired anxiously.

"Very much. It's just—I guess it's pretty strong," and she giggled. "I'm not used to anything hot and sweet like this. I'll have to go slowly."

Her host smiled benevolently upon her, and turned to busy himself with a portable radiogram near the fireplace. He selected records, he arranged them in order. Tubes rattled and squawked and then warmed to their task after LeRoy had turned the switch and made the necessary tonal adjustments.

Strains of Prokofiev's "Alexander Nevsky" cantata burst impressively. The steppes lay in misery under Tartaric invasion. Shepherds piped, the sanguinary accomplishments of Alexander were recited; Crusaders invaded Pskov. . . .

Isabelle curled trustfully on the couch, her legs folded under her skirt, the mug of spiced wine cooling in her hands, and Mr. Perrine came to sit beside her.

There was a daring intimacy about this. Isabelle supposed that in a saner moment she would have abhorred the spectacle, if she had been able to stand aloof and observe herself. It couldn't be the wine. Wine wasn't as strong as gin, for instance, and she and Ralph had cocktails nearly every evening.

What, then? The odor of burning logs, of music, a sense of shadows outside, which lengthened and chilled and vanished into bleached undergrowth as the sun lost itself in clouds behind the nearest ridge?

"Arise, Russians, take up your weapons.
Arise and fight and bleed and die,
With blood and sweat and tears,
For Russia is our native land.
We die for Russia, yet we live;
Forever we will live, no matter how we die,
If we go out to slay the foes of Russia."

These epic lines were orated softly by Mr. Perrine somewhat in distortion—in complete distortion and bad invention, if one paid heed to the phraseology of the original cantata.

Yet the machine was muted to the demands of limited space. No one unfamiliar with the choir's chant could have detected that LeRoy was making up his own version.

Isabelle Bee felt a rare humility at being permitted to share in this treasure. She was compelled to regard LeRoy as a connoisseur of every art and cultural effect. Not only did he know all about painting, not only did he consider and love and acquire frail silvery trinkets (humble grass stems, as he termed them, in the garden of human beauty), not only had he travelled far and wide, and risked death many times; he knew music as well.

Probably he knew more about music than anyone Izzo had ever met. And Russian medieval history, too.

Tears came into her eyes as she worshipped—not necessarily the man, but at least his cultural affinities.

(The entire knowledge that LeRoy possessed of Prokofiev and Alexander Nevsky, and Russian history and legendry at large, was gleaned from a brief text printed inside the covers of that record album.)

A pitying soprano concluded her lamentation for the dead.

Silence ruled until the last record dropped into place and a paean of victory burst the bounds of ordinary song. By this time LeRoy had drawn himself very close to his guest. Izzo trembled at the contact.

He had his eyes closed; a dreamy smile played about his small mouth. "Isabelle," he whispered. She heard him, she saw his lips shape her name. She could hear him in spite of the hullabaloo from the radiogram.

"Isabelle. Kiss me."

This was passing the limits of any ordinary flirtation in which Izzo might have indulged herself occasionally before. It was like the time when she was with Horace Applington at the Lake Surprise picnic.

But LeRoy could not be lightly upbraided and restrained as Horace could. He was no mere high-school teacher, but a sophisticate, a man of the world and of the Arts, the possessor of imposing creative talents . . . and yet so like a little boy.

It must be the exigency of

STRANGE DAY

to give him. It was almost her duty. Yes, indeed, she had something to give. A mere kiss? That was no sin—she was not being truly wicked, a faithless wife. What harm, when he cried for the touch of her lips upon his face? When he needed a maternal comfort and reassurance . . . or was it merely maternal?

The scent of mulled wine was in her nostrils, the ringing of Prokofiev in her ears, as—shaking, still reluctant—she awarded herself to LeRoy for that sacred moment, and touched her face against his.

LeRoy's hands came to her hair. They played and stroked. His tone was very low when he spoke at last.

"It was wonderful," he said, "your coming to-day. I thank you."

"LeRoy, it's late. I've been here a long time. I've got to go now."

"But you'll come again?"

"If you want me to."

"Isabelle, I need you. I need you to help me with my work. We need each other."

"Oh, LeRoy—"

"You'll come again—real soon? Perhaps, shall we say, at least once a week?" He roused, he stood upright and held her hand and looked searchingly into her face.

"Maybe I shouldn't really come. I mean—well, I've never done anything like this before."

His goblin face broke into a grin, his brows were arched. "My dear girl, you can't afford to abide all your life by Middlefield standards! Not when you have so much to offer — sensitivity, understanding, encouragement, aid—"

She was silent. He went to turn off the mechanism of the radiogram, for the needle was scratching in the groove. Isabelle took advantage of this moment to prepare for departure. She got up off the couch and smoothed her clothing. The wine . . . no, she couldn't finish her mug. It was too gooey-tasting, really.

LeRoy came to her and took her hands in his. "Darling, we will each complement the other. I require your aid—so desperately I require it—and you are craving whatever I have to offer you. Your life at home—oh, I can envision it, your husband coming home from the bank, the evening paper, the trivial chitchat of business and financial affairs. But there's part of you that is above and beyond all that. It is a part that you will bring to me, and that I shall receive so gladly."

He could say these things with smoothness and every conversational accomplishment. It was almost as if he spoke lines from a play, something rehearsed and offered many times before in a drama of human conduct.

Again she thought of Noel Coward. She tried to think of other geniuses she had seen on the stage, of great authors interviewed on television, of the sombre modernists extolled in art magazines. There was something of all these in LeRoy Perrine.

And she had done nothing really wrong. She had only kissed him, she had let him touch her hair. He wanted her kindness so intently; he insisted that he did.

Isabelle wished earnestly that she might reply to him in kind, speaking his own language and with his own slurring accents. Yet all she could do was to lower her eyes and mumble, "Thank you, LeRoy. I'm glad I can help."

"Of course," he said lightly, and seemed to be closing the door upon the more spiritual phase of their conversation. "You can help me a great deal."

He brought her coat and other things.

there a mirror?"

"Certainly. Right in there."

Beyond the crowded bedroom was a small bathroom, and thither Isabelle repaired. She had some difficulty in observing the dictates of modesty. The door was warped and difficult to close, and a spotted rag rug got in the way as well. Nevertheless, she effected privacy at last, and surveyed herself in a smeared mirror above the washbasin.

She was not particularly happy, standing thus amid the appurtenances of Mr. Perrine's bachelor intimacies, nor was she truly inspired by them.

At her left, the tub cried for a good scrubbing. A shower hose of corroded red rubber lay like a dead cobra amid dried froth on the tub's bottom. Razors, old shaving brushes, vials half filled with headache powders and mysterious capsules—possibly to be consumed by LeRoy Perrine for the betterment of his health — were crowded on a shelf above the washbasin.

Apparently this bathroom was a belated adjunct decreed by the Zinsmasters or some previous owners, for there was no basement underneath. Wind ripped in between blocks on which the structure was installed, and twisted through the cracks and made a draught about one's feet.

To battle the discomfort of the elements, a small gas heater was blazing; but it burned all the oxygen from the air. Isabelle found her head reeling stupidly.

Sustained sounds of faint fresh melody come to Isabelle's ears. She applied the rest of her make-up. She dragged open the resisting door and gulped the more palatable air of the house beyond.

LeRoy stood before her in the murky studio-living-room where the radiogram resounded once more.

It was not Prokofiev. A weird, persistent, repetitious breath of wind instruments whined on and on. There was a familiarity in these strains. Isabelle managed to smile, though she found her heart beating furiously.

He said, "You recognise that, of course"

"You mean the music?"

It was Oriental, she thought. Was it a ballet or a bacchanal? She was about to say "Aida," yet something restrained her. She was so ignorant of the complicated treasures in Perrine's storehouse! She must not make him aware of her lacks or he might be offended, and there could be no future sipping from these delicate founts.

"The music," he said, "to end music. Life and death . . . all Creation extended to a single crushing climax."." He sighed. "Ravel was great—great! Now, only a few years after his passing, we dimly begin to realise the magnitude the dear man encompassed."

Thank heaven those two identifying syllables had given a necessary clue! Isabelle cried humbly. "The 'Bolero!'"

(Did they have it at home? No, the Pflages owned this work in their tiny cabinet. But Izzo recalled that the first record of the album had been broken when it arrived in a shipment of Christmas presents. The Pflagers had never bothered to have it replaced.)

Perrine came closer to her. His soft thick hands were clamped on hers, his round eyes narrowed themselves in contemplation.

"I was privileged . . . The first performance in Paris . . . it was in 1928. He did it for Rubinstein. You know—Ida, the dancer?"

Isabelle thrilled to her toes at this casual mention of such overwhelming artistic inception.

"You—you were there, LeRoy?"

"I was just a boy." He shrugged one shoulder.

Thus she tried to see him as he must have been: a winning youth, reaching out so eagerly for the tattered riches of the Left Bank. In one brief flash she saw him seated with other students, calling for vin ordinaire; she saw him treading the campus of the Sorbonne. (At least she supposed the Sorbonne boasted a campus.)

"You were there," she whispered. "You heard it the first time, the time Ravel played it for—for Ida."

The honest Isabelle had never heard of Ida Rubinstein until this moment, but she dared not confess such fault. It would be a repellent; LeRoy might be shocked beyond endurance.

Wind instruments cried their beating invitation. With lifted gaze now, through half-open lips, Perrine identified them: flute, clarinet, oboe, trumpet. He could do this quite readily, since, with assiduous devotion, he had given study to the two-page folder that came with the "Bolero" album.

As in the case of Prokofiev, LeRoy Perrine's wisdom on the subject was gleaned from this one source. But he had a parrot's mind: He could recite facts or phraseology in impressive reiteration.

Worshipfully he told Isabelle Bee, the while his moist hands were gripping hers, "It was a riot. Absolute madness. You never saw anything like those people! They were driven into complete insanity! A November evening, chilly for Paris. I remember the lights outside, and that one flaming figure—Rubinstein herself — as she swayed above the table top. No wonder Paris went crazy that night! It was almost compulsive. As if we all soaked ourselves in the brandy of Ravel's soul!"

As a matter of fact, although Mr. Perrine could not recall it now, at the exact moment when Rubinstein was threatened by the mob of devotees, LeRoy Perrine, with several cronies, had been snickering over a copy of "Bad Girl," by Vina Delmar, in the deserted classroom of an Indianapolis high school, where they were supposed to be transacting committee business for their debating society.

Music piped, droned, and brayed. It persisted in presenting again and again the same theme. Perrine the Interpreter called attention to the repetition of rhythmic figures, the variation of development. He noted the translation through the successive and combined languages of individual instruments.

He named the piccolo as author of the clarinet's fluting, the bassoon as father of the English horn. Poor Isabelle could never recognise the flagrancy of his errors.

She felt as though she were a country cousin with an invitation to attend a salon. The offensive mulled wine whirled her head and made her entertain wild notions of crowded centuries wheeling up against her with their own melody, dripping with their own color. Bach, Corot, Mozart, Raphael, Beethoven, Millet, Tchaikovsky, Winslow Homer, Debussy, and Sir Joshua Reynolds rioted together in stricken fancy, irrespective of time or medium.

Their glory was chronicled by all the articulate great, from Thackeray down to Thomas Wolfe. The musical or dramatic interpreters who followed them were jumbled happily together. Jenny Lind seemed singing with Caruso to support her. Fritz Kreisler and Burl Ives melted their strings in accompaniment.

LeRoy had his arms tightly around her; his oniony breath was close to hers. She feared seduction, but worse than that she feared that the vibrant sensitive soul of this bizarre hypnotist would be appalled if she were so gauche as to resist him with bourgeois flutterings and struggles.

He moaned through the gathering dusk, and through the insistent menace of repeated harmony, "It was a year later—just imagine, Isabelle, only one year—when this angelic beauty was brought to America. I remember the night . . . damp, foggy . . . a strange ornate auditorium on West Fifty-seventh Street. Of course you know it, darling—Carnegie Hall?

"The Philharmonic was never in better form — positively never. Of course they were inspired. Why not? Toscanini was conducting. I was still a boy. I dropped to my knees, there in the aisle of the gallery. We were all crying, Isabelle—weeping, positively sobbing. Of course I kept thinking of the year before, in Paris—Rubinstein and all the mob. This was an American version of the same hysteria."

LeRoy's arms were around her now. Some remote, polite portion of her nature stood aloof and shrieked. Most certainly she was allowing a betrayal of every probity to which she had clung through her personal existence.

The rector, the officers of various clubs and circles, Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen herself—Isabelle discerned them in shocked assemblage, gathered gaping in stuffy evening mists beyond Mr. Perrine's shoulders, shrieking their affront to high heaven.

More vigorous and definite than any censure of theirs, however, was the practical disapproval of Mr. Ralph Bee. Ralph was no giant, no boxer, no quarterback, no primitive hero of war or peace. Nevertheless, he emerged in theory from the throng and approached. Ralph lifted a healthy foot and planted a violent kick upon Mr. LeRoy Perrine's rear portions.

It was strange that LeRoy did not experience the assault or quiver at the impact. His face was pressed close to Isabelle's. His eyes were shut. Passion and reminiscence still mingled in his breathing.

"I remember that night," he was gasping doggedly. "I can never pass Carnegie Hall and not remember it. November fourteenth—a Thursday, it was—1929. Ravel was an American national hero from that moment forth." The culmination of strings and woodwinds developed rapidly in palpitating space behind him.

At the exact moment, on the night of November fourteenth, 1929, when the audience at Carnegie Hall leaped up to halloo a mass enthusiasm, LeRoy Perrine was still an Indianapolis high-school boy of tawdry gifts. He had never heard of Maurice Ravel, and he was not at all certain that Toscanini was not a Chicago gangster.

Isabelle managed to find her voice.

"LeRoy——"

"Yes, my darling?"

"The music. It — it's stopped."

He sighed a little, clung more tightly to her. "Oh, yes, dear girl, it's stopped. But do we need to——"

"LeRoy, I've got to go."

"Why, darling? Why?"

"It's late. I've got to get dinner. I don't even know what I'm going to have."

"Angel — darling Isabelle—must you think of those things?"

She tried to say "Yes," but it sounded like a squeak instead. Perrine drew away from her. Isabelle tremulously smoothed her garments. The radiogram needle ground deeper into an

golden revel of the music was spent and done.

LeRoy stood abject and crestfallen before her.

"Isabelle, I was a beast."

She gulped something; she didn't know what she said. She was heartily ashamed. Isabelle Bee hoped that the outraged ghosts of the rector and of Mrs. Lily Winterset Heggen would retreat in good order and never tell what they had witnessed.

"Dear, did I frighten you? I'm such a primitive——"

Her voice shuddered feebly. "It—it's all right. I'm just ashamed."

"It was the music! It was Ravel—Ravel and you. The combination was simply too much for me. You have such warmth, such sympathy . . . you have so much to give. Darling, I hope I haven't frightened you too much?" And he did seem genuinely alarmed. "Say that you'll come again?"

She murmured that she had best not come. Yet, despite natural repugnance, the recollection of maudlin physical contact was fading already.

She could see his brushes, the appurtenances of his craft in the dim room: humble tools of his art, the weak ladder on which he crawled. He needed her. He said that he did. He swore it.

Might she not at least, safely in the future, lend him her ear, even if she did not offer her lips? It seemed the merest charity if she would do so.

"Next week," he was saying. "Oh, darling—please? Next week? You do want to come, don't you, my sweet? Say you'll come again."

"But I—"

"Don't be afraid of me, Isabelle."

Surely there was nothing to fear in the man now. "Well, I—"

"Say—next Wednesday?"

She murmured, "All right. No, I can't. There's a meeting."

"Then Thursday?"

"Oh, LeRoy, I—"

"Please say yes, darling."

"Yes." She could barely twitter the syllable.

LeRoy trod hurriedly toward the radiogram, lifted the arm, and turned the switch. Chauncey the cat twisted out of his sleep on the cushioned chair. He stretched, yawned, regarded Isabelle balefully, and spat at her.

She was laboring under a weight of self-abnegation. Here she had been, wallowing in these stolen hours—half the afternoon it seemed—neglecting all domestic obligation. And poor Grace—she had left her gaoled in the car. Of course it wasn't really too cold, and Grace wore plenty of fur. But—oh, how selfish! Isabelle hadn't even thought what she should fix for Ralph's dinner.

But before Izzo reassembled her domestic attention, to wrestle with problems of broccoli and potatoes, and veal croquettes or broiled salmon—before she stepped back within the walls of her proper Middlefield state—she would allow herself the luxury of a silent farewell to Perrine and Prokofiev.

LeRoy had taken the painting back to its easel. She could not worship it there. She lifted it and walked with it toward the window. Ah, it was growing late. The sky was clouding, the room was expanding in dimness. LeRoy had turned on a light.

Isabelle stood near this lamp now, holding "Prokofiev at Sevastopol" in her hands, letting the queer little figures melt into her consciousness. She would retain them in memory until the next week, when—if she dared, if she was not too stricken with conscientious fear in the meantime—she might taste the wine of communion once more.

"Oh, Isabelle, darling. By the way—"

She whispered, "Yes?" but

painting.

"Could I ask a very gr
favor of you?"

"Of course, LeRoy."

"I wonder—" and, standi
close, he poked a roguish fi
ger at the bag hanging fro
her shoulder—"I wonder—
and the words came cu
puckishly, and were empha
sised by the weird flutterin
his brows—"I wonder i
any chance there might b
twenty-dollar bill in that w
derful bag?"

Isabelle looked at him w
sagging jaw.

"You see"—in a rapid b
of explanation—"I'm terri
hard-pressed right now. Th
have been going rather b
with me—I mean, no painti
sold. Oh, gad, it's such
struggle! You have no i
But I've got myself in
terrible jam. There's a y
young chap coming to h
dinner with me, and I s
must go down the lane—p
haps I can ride with you?—
the little store.

"I'm afraid my credit's ra
used up. But, of course, I
can pay cash — and I
promise him steaks, gri
over the coals. Someone
must fix some for you. I'
frightfully good cook. I m
ade the steaks in wine and g
lic. You'll adore them."

Carefully she put the pa
ing down upon a chair a
opened her bag. "I'm so
Isabelle said, "I haven't
much money with me to-d
had lunch and—and some o
expenses. I've just got a f
dollar bill left, and fi
singles, and some cha
Would that be enough?"

There was an emptiness
disappointment in the mo
the room now. Poor Le
It must be dreadful to b
poverty-stricken, to be a
living on the ragged edge.
hadn't thought about th
fore. It was so strange, h
ing someone ask her for m

But it only — good gra
she should be ashamed of h
self! She had so much
much—she and Ralph—
security. Their home w
be completely paid for a
and she had her little b
account, and soon again s
mer rentals would increase
private nest egg, so deplete
the charity of that day.

"LeRoy, I'm sorry I hav
got a twenty, but here's t
money. I won't need an
the way home. I can ch
the things I have to get a
store."

He laughed, he accepted
money eagerly, he rubbed
abbreviated nose against
shoulder.

"Isabelle, darling, you'r
lamb—a perfect lamb! No
promise you that I shan't
too severe—in the futur
mean. It will help so m
You don't know how I ne
your assistance. But I shal
very conservative in my
mands. Not more than tw
a week—or shall we say tw
five? That wouldn't b
much to ask, would it, dar

On closing her bag Isa
taken up the painting a
She stood gazing blankl
Perrine across the top o
canvas. The room seemed
be going away from her, y
face stayed close. Far a
dry, scared voice was s
"I don't think I quite u
stand what you mean."

The face wavered, rece
It was there again, closer
ever: a sloping mask, ey
tended, the mouth twi
with the energy of word

"Why, darling, don't
see? Please! I don't ne
be insistent, but one simp
to get along, somehow
other. And you—you'r
position to give me som
I lack, and I'm quite in
tion to give you somethi
lack—something you de
tremendously. You've
starved for it, haven't yo
dear? Well, you need
starved no longer. Sta

fur commingled with the stripes of Chauncey, and this time—this time it was Chauncey who suffered. Grace had not forgotten that scratch, and she was determined to repay Chauncey with every villainy of her sharp little teeth.

He tore loose. The battle was dissolved. He rocketed toward the nearest tree, with Grace hallooing a tail length behind. He soared up the great trunk to a branch far, far aloft. There he glared while the victorious spaniel danced noisily on ground and air far below him. It would take LeRoy Perrine the better part of the next day to get Chauncey down.

. . . .

In the cheaply furnished Philadelphia living-room into which Ralph Bee had been spirited, there waited three other people, and two of them could not have spoken had they wished to.

They were Mr. Austin and a young woman with kinky blond hair. The two sat propped side by side on a soiled red couch. Each had a big slab of adhesive tape plastered across the mouth, and their hands were bound by the same material.

They sat, like the grotesque monkeys awarded as prizes in booths at carnivals, motionless and supplicant. Austin was coatless. He had on only his grey vest and a mottled necktie, and one of his shirt sleeves was torn as if he had been mishandled savagely. There was a bruise on his chin.

The woman rolled her eyes at Ralph, and probably she was pale underneath her make-up, but rouge still lay in generous supply upon her cheeks.

Her eyes protruded with a china-doll expression of alarmed vacuity. She wore sheer dark stockings and green platform-soled shoes with brass nailheads, and her skirt was green as well.

In a chair opposite the captives lolled a well-dressed man of forty, moderately plump, with glistening rimless spectacles. He smoked a pipe and glanced fatuously from the people on the couch to his new victim in the person of Ralph Bee.

"Mr. Bee, we were watching from our window and we saw you make your delivery, but we didn't expect to meet you in person." Then, to the black-moustached thug who still gripped Ralph's coat sleeve, "Leave him alone, Noltz. He won't bother anybody."

"Let's find out what he wanted, Ollie."

"An excellent idea," said the man with the glasses. "Just why did you come up here and ring the bell, Mr. Bee?"

"Too nosey for your own good," muttered the thinnest and youngest man.

"Shut up, Perry," said Ollie. "Why did you come back, Mr. Bee?"

Ralph found his voice. "The keys for Hodges' car. I forgot to give them to Austin."

"Still the Boy Scout lending the helping hand, aren't you?"

Noltz, the man with the brigandish moustache, waved his hands in the air. "I saw him closing that boot and turning the key, after Austin had already started in with the box. One of us ought to have gone down. Are we dumb!"

Ollie knocked the ashes out of his pipe. He took out a bright-striped pouch and began to refill the pipe leisurely. "I'm too tickled about the way things worked out to get sore at anybody."

There was a worse buzzing in Ralph's ears than had resounded decades and decades earlier, when the Mountain Avenue bus crashed past him in the early *morning*. He heard his own small voice coming up defiantly: "I don't know who you people are, but you look like a gang of crooks to me."

Ollie's gleaming gaze met Ralph's. He laughed again. "You honestly thought there were ashes in that box?"

Ralph said (it seemed that his voice was fluttering girlishly, though he tried to discipline it): "That's what Mr. Hodges told me. I take people's word if——"

He wished fervently that he had never had any crooks in his life before, and wished that he would never have any again. He would see to it that he didn't, if he got out of this place alive.

"There's only one thing I know," said Ralph Bee, "for a fact: the appendicitis. Hodges wasn't faking about that. Neither was the doctor in Norristown."

Ollie snapped a lighter and drew the flame into his pipe. Ralph watched the coal glowing and spreading. "Don't worry." Ollie puffed out the smoke. "We're not going to hurt you."

Ralph squeaked, "What is actually in that box?"

Ollie pointed his pipe at Ralph. "If you ever happen to meet any double-crossers at your bank, just tell them about this little incident and let that be a lesson to them. I don't like double-crossers. That's the reason my dear old pal Austin from Boston, over there on the couch, has got his mouth all taped up now—and his girl friend too.

"Austin and Hodges both smell! For all I know, the Lord Almighty is punishing Hodges right now. He oughtn't to have lied to me, and cabled that he couldn't make that contact in Honolulu. But he did lie, and so did Austin."

HE said, "Suspicion is a pretty good thing sometimes. We tailed Austin to this building and subleased the apartment next door. We got into this place when they were gone, and cut in on that phone over there, and we sat in our apartment and listened to every call for the last two weeks.

"When Hodges first got to New York we were right on the beam, and so were we this afternoon when he called from Norristown and said he had some poor dope—a banker, no less!—and what else was it, a Boy Scout council man?—that he was trusting to deliver his mother's ashes down here. But I don't think you're a poor dope. Just kindhearted."

Darker and darker grew the room before Ralph's eyes. Chair, couch, the man named Ollie—all arose. A strong arm came around him. Noltz had caught him before he could fall. Noltz hauled him into another chair, and Ralph lay back and closed his eyes.

From afar rose the voice of Ollie. "All right, gentlemen. Step on it."

"I'd like to take care of him," said Noltz murderously, and Ralph knew that he must be talking about the accused double-crosser called Austin from Boston.

"What's the use?" asked Ollie. "Use your head, stupid! I haven't had a murder rap against me since I've been in *this* business, and I don't want one now. He's got a federal record — I haven't. Neither have you; *neither* has Perry there. But Austin's got one. What can he do? Go to Dick Tracy about this?

"If Hodges gets over his appendicitis, they can cry in each other's arms. What do you say we get going? Ninety thousand dollars is a good afternoon's work in anybody's language."

Ralph tried to open his eyes, but the weight upon them seemed too immense. He heard a mumbling with Perry's voice uppermost, and then Ollie laughed and said, "Of course he's seen our faces. But he doesn't know our real names, or what towns we operate in. We never operated in Philadelphia before, did we?"

Ralph raised heavy eyelids—enough so that he could see the shadow of Ollie falling across his knees.

"I've got a pretty good notion," Ollie told Ralph Bee, "that you won't mention this to anyone. I doubt that the bank and the Boy Scouts and the American Legion and all the rest of your acitivities, with which our friend Hodges regaled us on the telephone in conversation with our friend Austin there—I guess none of those people would be interested in what you've been doing this afternoon, or would believe you if you told them, or if you went to the cops.

"Would you want to get mixed up publicly in the smuggling of heroin, Mr. Bee? I doubt it. Heroin is an outlawed drug. Not only its manufacture, but its actual possession is forbidden by law, and could land you in the penitentiary, Mr. Bee. And you were in possession of heroin, weren't you?"

He bent closer, and fastened his hands on Ralph's shoulders.

"You do another good turn pretty soon," said Ollie. "Don't worry about Austin. He won't squawk—not as hot as he is. But maybe the woman might. She's the dizzy type. What we definitely don't want is a rumpus. So give us five or ten minutes before you take that tape off of *them*."

He smirked. "Of course, if you're frightened, you can just leave them and go home. They'd probably kick out a window light or pound on the door eventually."

Ralph told him, falteringly, "I'm not afraid. I'll stay."

As in a reluctant dream he heard the door click, and heard the feet going away, and listened to the sound of the elevator. He sat with his eyes glazed and glued upon the pair on the couch.

Austin began to struggle as soon as the hijackers were gone. He worked himself into a stooped position with both his feet on the floor. He tried to hop across the floor toward Ralph.

He made growling sounds. That was the first time Ralph had realised that Austin's ankles were taped together, too, although the woman's were not. Ralph stood up, but before he could go to Austin's assistance the man had fallen heavily.

Ralph looked about for scissors. There were none. He fumbled into a kitchenette beyond a dining-room at the rear, and found a knife. Chivalrously ignoring the fallen Austin, he carved loose the tape binding the woman's wrists.

She lifted a lame arm and slid her fingernail beneath the plaster on her mouth. She peeled it off, and with its unpeeling there issued a stream of unquotable and unprintable denunciation.

Ralph Bee felt that her excoriation of himself was wholly unjustified, and even in his weakened condition he flushed. But the tirade was not aimed at him. The woman skipped across to the recumbent Austin, and before Ralph could stop her she had kicked him.

"You told me you were in real estate!" she yelled.

She kicked again. Ralph seized the woman's wrist and dragged her back. She flung herself on the couch and began to sob.

Ralph worked with his knife and soon had released Austin from the adhesive tape binding his wrists and ankles. The moment his right hand was free, Austin began to tear off the plaster on his face.

That was a painful operation, for his upper lip was adorned with a close-shaven small moustache, and some of the hairs came off with the plaster. He didn't look at Ralph throughout this chore. His horrid stare was fixed steadily on the woman.

Loosed from all restraint, Austin dived toward the couch, dragged the woman into an upright position, and gave her a stinging slap on the face.

. . . Ralph R. Bee was now more than ever the mythical, imagined grandson of General Barnard E. Bee.

More than that, he had dwelt this day with danger. His was the hand that flung the magazine and knocked the glass from Leila Hartnett's clutch, his the mouth that drank down the brandy bought by Joe Myonko, his the voice that defied the threat of Freddy Dutcher. . . .

Ralph had never seen a man strike a woman before, except in jest or in the movies.

He spoke without hesitation; he spoke automatically: "You—stop—that."

Red and angry, Austin turned in contempt. Ralph moved a step closer. He cried again, distinctly if shrilly, "Stop that! Leave her alone!"

"She's got it coming to her. You don't know half the story, brother. Who's going to stop me? You?"

"Yes," said Ralph. A weapon . . . indeed he had a weapon. He held the knife with which he had sawed the sticky tape. Its point was sharp. In a trance he marched upon Austin, and even before he had reached the plump young man, Austin began to back away.

"Lay off the dame, chum," said Ralph Bee.

"All right, all right," he said rapidly. "Forget it. Let's not have any trouble about this."

Ralph visualised the stalwart expression worn by the pictured face of General Bee, and he strove to cast his own countenance in the same mould. "There won't be any trouble unless you make it."

"I'm not making any trouble," grumbled Austin. "I've had enough for one day. Where's my coat, Aggie?"

The woman did not reply. She was crouched again on the sofa, her blond head amid cushions, her face reburied in her arms. Austin walked around the apartment looking for his coat. He found it hanging over a chair in the kitchenette and came back sliding his arms into the sleeves.

"Where's that dough I gave you yesterday, Aggie?"

The woman's muffled and tearful voice said, "I bought two new dresses. You told me to buy anything I wanted."

"Well, what a dope I was!" said Austin. "A worse dope than this dope that that dope Hodges said he was sending here with his mother's ashes!"

He took bills out of his pocket. There was not a large roll. He counted the money. "I'd like to forget the day I ever saw Philadelphia—or you either," he said.

She moaned, "If you're going, you'd better take your stuff."

"Give it to the Salvation Army. Pretty near worn out, anyway." He looked at Ralph. "You talked about those car keys—"

Ralph found the keys in his pocket and tossed them across to Austin. Without a backward glance he went out, slamming the front door so hard that it shook.

Aggie lifted her head and gazed pensively toward the door and rolled her round eyes.

"Isn't this awful, mister?" she breathed. "The things a girl has to put up with! Do you know what he told me when we met? He said he was a big real-estate operator. And just imagine—smugglers and thieves! They walked right into this apartment and they shoved a gun against Austin and they tied us up."

Ralph said, "I've got to be going. I—I'll be just as glad to get out of here as he was."

"Gee," said the woman, "I need a drink—and how! What about you?"

"No, I—I've already had four drinks to-day. I'm not accustomed to—"

"How about a nice cuppa coffee?"

"I could stand one," said Ralph feebly.

"I won't be a minute." She went into the kitchen. He heard the sounds of her activity. Ralph realised that he was still wearing his overcoat, though he had dropped his hat when Noltz shoved him.

He thought that he should take off his coat, but it seemed too much trouble, and he was very tired himself, shrunken and beaten, though no one had beaten him in fact. There were just those two or three pushes Noltz gave him. . . .

Aggie repaired the damage to her countenance while she was making coffee, and when she came with cups and saucers on a tray, she was actually humming.

"That character Austin! Well, I wasn't so crazy about him anyway. But it was an awful shock, Mr.—what did they say your name was?"

"Bee." At last he had removed his overcoat.

"It is an awful shock, Mr. Bee, when a girl is honest and really tries to be a lady and everything—and then she gets mixed up with a friend—you know, someone pretty nice, but not too nice. Well, anyway, when a girl finds that she's actually been mixed up with criminals! It is awful. It makes you just sick. I'm just sick, Mr. Bee. What did you say you were? A banker? I don't think I ever knew a banker before. You know—not chummy."

They sipped their coffee. Aggie said, "Mr. Bee, if you don't mind, I'd like to make myself more comfortable. That was an awful strain and everything."

"I'm going right along."

She smiled at him. Struggle as he might, he felt his glance drawn to those tapering legs crossed so invitingly before him, and he imagined that the stocking seams on the backs of the calves would be a trifle crooked.

. . . There was that girl, the girl in the Hallowe'en masque in Middlefield, the girl in the ballet costume. There was Amy Lou Pagwell.

He stood up. "No, I've really got to go."

"Please stick around a few minutes. After all, Mr. Bee, I have had an awful experience. Please don't leave me alone. Please. Pretty please?"

"O.K., sister," said Ralph, wickedly and recklessly.

She went away through the little hall and into a bedroom, although he did not hear the door close. She had not closed the door, in fact; she was humming as she moved about in the bedroom, singing a little—an off-key snatch of a popular song.

Ralph thought that he should like a drink of water—cold water. He went out into the kitchen and drank thirstily. On his way back, as he rounded the corner of the hall next to the dinette, he saw a cupboard door ajar.

A man's clothes were hanging there: two suits. Ralph averted his gaze and walked on. But the side hall was on his right, and the open door of the bedroom, and Aggie was in front of a mirror with her back to him; she was sliding her bare arms into the sleeves of a lacy negligee.

This was the final pollution in a day that reeked of violence and corruption as no other day, perhaps, within the history of mankind. So Ralph, in raw and flogged innocence, sincerely believed.

That man scarcely gone out of the apartment . . . his clothes still hanging there . . . the woman donning this garb for Ralph Bee's delectation.

He sped across the living-

STRANGE DAY

room, seized his coat and hat, and was gone out of Apartment 4G faster than the narcotic hijackers had gone.

He fairly ran from the building and hastened to the corner of the park. There was a main thoroughfare at that intersection. Ralph thought he might find a taxi-cab.

Still in his daze, still a fugitive of sorts (though no longer a fugitive from the past, only one escaping from grins and jeers, from strain and murder of the present), he found himself passing signs that he could not read, gazing blankly at store windows. He walked and walked.

He gazed about at times with the unseeing perplexity of an air-crash victim set down, hurled safe and clear of the wreckage, on strange terrain; a visitor from another planet, now stepping high or drawn too tight against the ground by the gravity of this earth.

He did recognise a taxi-cab when he saw one, however. It had just discharged a passenger, and Ralph chirped and made motions.

"What station — I mean, where do I get the Reading trains?"

The driver told him.

"Take me. I've got to catch a train."

He could give a direction and he could follow a plan, even without the urging of active consciousness. It was as sure and true as the damp New Jersey sky that arched above his house and Izzo's. The Reading trains across New Jersey followed the route of the Jersey Central, and that brought them—a few of them—to a brief stop at the station in Middlefield.

He was in an unfamiliar depot, fumbling with his wallet before the ticket window.

"Middlefield, New Jersey. When is the next train?"

"You wanted one way, did you? Not a round trip?"

No, no, never a round trip . . . "Yes. One way. Correct."

Far behind him blew the tempests of madness. Angry bucks ran unchallenged with snorts of suicide and disaster, and the evil does sent out the challenge of their attempt at seduction.

Beneath the throbbing floor and car carpet, beneath the scuffed soles of the shoes he wore, Ralph could feel thick wheels grinding fast against unblemished rails, thudding solidly across switches, taking him to Middlefield and the course from which he had run away.

The bank, the bank! Izzo might not yet be home when he got there; but in any case there was the riddle of the bank awaiting. As subconsciously he seemed to have constructed the sound many times during that day, he could hear the telephone clamoring in his empty house. Nobody was there to answer the phone, nobody knew where he was gone.

And what had Joe Conneally and Paul and all the rest said, at the bank, when he did not appear and Isabelle didn't even call, as when she called two years ago last November to say that Ralph had the 'flu?

The bank, the bank.

It would be a painful thing to face, but he must deal with it. Surely out of the strife of these hours, somewhere in the riddle of drama where he had walked, he had learned a cunningness unnoted before.

He had learned, for instance, to lie. He had lied about his non-existent car, alleged to have broken down. Well, he would utter lies again.

He would go into the bank bright and early Thursday morning, and closet himself with his superiors. He would say——

Amnesia. That was it. He would tell those intelligent, incredulous men that he didn't know what had come over him, and that his wife was not there to see it. He had remembered rising and going out of the house, preparing himself for the day at work, and then had known nothing more until he returned in the evening. He would shake his head wryly in the telling. He didn't know where he had been, and hoped that he had done nothing wrong.

Well, they would be much concerned. They would have a doctor thump him and take his blood pressure and talk to him, and doubtless it would be suggested that Ralph should take a week off, and then return as a new man.

Ralph Bee could not quite make up his mind whether to include Izzo, also, in the falsehood of this amnesia. He felt that he should not.

She had worry enough with Mother.

No, he would not tell her. He would pretend to go to the bank each day, but instead he might have to wander obscure side streets of New York, or sit dozing in picture shows.

When the train reached the station in Middlefield, Ralph looked at his wrist-watch. It was fully normal for him to arrive at this hour. It wouldn't matter too much whether Izzo was home yet or not, except that he would be more immediately faced with a decision, if she were at home, as to whether or not he should confide in her.

The Mountain Avenue bus picked him up. When he got off at Willow Weir Road, the sky was faintly copperish southwest of the Watchung ranges. Before he reached his house he could see that Izzo was not yet home. There was milk on the front step, and the afternoon newspaper, their own local paper.

Ralph unlocked the door and carried these things inside. He took off his coat and hat and hung them carefully in the hall closet, and then, closing the door, on which there was a long mirror, he regarded himself silently in the interior dimness of this reflection.

He saw before him the man who had participated in the near-tragic reunion of the Hartnetts. He had fed upon steak, he had flouted the threat of Myonko and Freddy Dutcher, and he had heard the guns that finished them and had seen blood upon the dirty floor. He was the rescuer of that doubled-up criminal who twisted beside his car, his appendix hot within him. He was the afternoon caller at the Philadelphia apartment . . .

Ralph closed his eyes. Remembered voices chattered and gobbled in demoniacal recollection. All the time, it was only Ralph Bee who stood there, foolishly conning himself.

In the living-room, above the fireplace, General Barnard E. Bee gazed in unspoken courage, and thought, perhaps, about Jackson standing like a stone wall.

Ralph carried the newspaper over to the parlor table and placed it there to be read later. He was not in a newspaper-reading mood. In the morning there would be another paper delivered, and he would read things in that paper.

He did not sense it now; he had been unconcerned with such expectation because throughout his whole life he had owned no immediate involvement with the things that are headlined or the people whose antics are chronicled.

There would be, for instance, a front-page story about a gambler murdered in Pennsylvania:

Gangland guns to-day wrote finis to the career of Joseph Myonko, professional gambler and convicted income - tax evader, and of his associate, Fred J. Dutcher, when they apparently walked into a trap in a roadhouse near here.

Dutcher was shot twice, Myonko five times, and both were dead when officers arrived on the scene.

A scant ninety minutes later, State Troopers, pursuing a speeding car on the Lincoln Highway, took into custody two men, both of them with police records. They were Sam (Little Boy) Gear, 42, and Cress Thatcher, 31, said by police to have a long criminal record.

In the possession of the men arrested were two German automatics of the well-known P-38 type. Officials declared that such weapons were used by the killers of Myonko and Dutcher. The suspects, booked on suspicion of murder, were lodged in . . .

And there would be a gossip column: one of those columns dutifully read and yet not too well appreciated by people like Izzo and Ralph, whose own activities would never make grist for the tattletales, yet whose eyes had roved the items for years without encountering such private reaction as these words might—not in all the scraps of pretty gossip served up by Walter Winchell, Leonard Lyons, Earl Wilson, Louella Parsons, or a dozen others.

Again the Jamie Harnetts are rumored to be cleaving, and the betting is that this time it will be definite. She (the glamorous Leila Montweller, remember?) was at the Blue Angel the other night with Old Faithful Bron Tucker. They were at the Stork the week before; and Jamie is sulking in his tent.

Oh, no longer, Ralph Bee would say to himself, no longer! This time he knew more about the matter than did the columnists.

Impossible as it would be for him to prognosticate items in the paper delivered the next day, he was equally a slave to that lack of precognition so decently gentle to the human race.

He could not envision the hour when he might pick up the pictorial magazine delivered at that house each week and, tumbling idly past the pictured riots, the new aeroplanes, the bathing beauties displayed, come upon a page fit to hold him spellbound.

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Federal narcotic agents made one of their best hauls last week in San Francisco, when they raided a hotel room and gathered in three dope smugglers, as well as contraband heroin to the estimated amount of 37,000 dollars. J. K. Finley, a tourist and amateur photographer registered at the hotel, happened to be passing through the corridor when the agents emerged with their captives resisting strenuously, and this picture is the result of Finley's hasty and effective photography.

There would be Ollie and Nolte and Perry, struggling in the arms of the law, and the sight of them would ring a deep-toned bell far in the recesses of Ralph Bee's quiet soul. But he would not know until he saw the picture in June, and even then he could tell no one.

Ralph walked into his kitchen. From afar he heard the clinking of a tool against stone, and he went to peer through the kitchen window. Kurt Pflager was working in his yard, as Kurt did so often even in winter, unless snow kept him from it.

Ralph swallowed. With an effort to be casual, he lit a cigarette and opened the back door.

Kurt hooted and waved. "How's the boy? What kind of a day did you have? Isabelle home?"

Ralph went down the steps. He said guardedly, "No, she's not home yet. I expect her just about any time."

Kurt wiped his hands on his old corduroy pants. Ralph thought with a shock of another gardener he had seen (how many years earlier was it that Leila Hartnett left the signs of Bucks County earth on her blue jacket?).

A thousand excuses and subterfuges lay before him. He must be cautious. He must remember that he had had amnesia or aphasia or whatever the doctor might call it; and, of course, the Pflagers should never be told. . . .

Kurt put some stones into his wheelbarrow and tossed a chisel beside them.

"What a day!" he declared. "Did I tell you last night that I had to go to the dentist? Boy, I was an hour and a half in that chair! You'd think he might have taken a day off, instead of drilling around my nerves. But he's a slave for work. Wonderful dentist, though. What a thing to do on your holiday!"

There was an atomic explosion in the crowded depth of Ralph's brain.

"Folks I felt sorry for," said Kurt, "when I was in town today were those folks in the stores. I guess that's one advantage of being in a government office or a bank, like us. At least we do get Washington's Birthday."

Garden and snug little homes revolved in the dusk. Washington's Birthday! The recognition poured across Ralph Bee like a running stream, like clear, truthful water from a hose. It rinsed his flesh from his frame and left him skeletal, bony, and shivering.

There had been that little gilt placard decorating each lobby desk for days and days before, at the Bankers Providential. It had warned all customers, it had warned all employees—except Ralph Bee, who went sublimely unwarned.

Washington's Birthday! Why, even the night before, when they were putting the books in proof, there had been the usual banter about what are you going to do and what I am going to do, and Betty and I are going over to her brother's place for dinner.

There had been all the other talk, the happy observation of this momentous Wednesday set aside for venerating an individual of the past . . . childish exuberance at consideration of a day of freedom, a day off from work, a holiday, the bank closed and shuttered and barred and guarded. I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little hatchet. . . . Cherry trees; the calm dignity of a well-remembered face beneath its powdered hair . . . There stands Jackson like a stone wall.

No, that was not Washington speaking; that was General Bee.

"Forgot to ask you last night," said Kurt, relighting his old cigar, "what you were going to do to-day. Clara ought to have asked you over for lunch or something, with Izzo gone."

Ralph stammered, "Oh—oh—I—I didn't do anything much. Just took a walk."

"Huh. You ought to have had Dr. Dawson putting in an inlay for you. Say, what time do you want to come over for the television? Tell you—you watch until you see our kitchen light go off, as per usual; then come right along."

"O.K. by me," said Ralph. He added, "Chum!" and went whistling into the kitchen.

In the narrow butler's pantry he poured himself a slug of solid rye whisky. He hesitated for a moment, then added another jigger.

This impressive beverage he carried to the bathroom above, and he was being a bumblebee in the shower when Izzo's tyres crunched in the driveway, and Grace went wild with shrill and vocal scurryings at finding herself back home.

Isabelle called a greeting aloft as she went toward the kitchen; Ralph hallooed amid his aquatics. When he came down, clean-shirted, shaved, necktie in hand (carefully he had picked out the blue one with yellow abstractions on it; he didn't like that necktie too well, but it had been an anniversary present from Izzo, and he wished to please her), Ralph found his wife putting sweet potatoes into the oven.

She had heard his step on the stairs; she was watching the doorway when he appeared. He wondered whether his face would tell her anything. A power of fondness leaped from his heart. He felt that he must swaddle his wife with devotion never offered before.

She was wonderful. Isabelle was really wonderful. He would never again sulk—even secretly—in boredom because of her strange little didoes and interests. Her face? He thought it paler than usual, yet a smile played on her lips.

Her eyes were bright as they met in the middle of the kitchen—Ralph and Isabelle—and kissed as they had not kissed for a long time.

"Ralphie. What kind of a day did you have?" They held each other at arm's length.

Women were certainly baffling. There was something in her face . . . she seemed capable of an understanding he had not dreamed she possessed. She might even be discerning the strange rack of mind and body he had undergone. And yet, if Izzo did own such intuition, she was wisely saying nothing at all about it.

Yes, women were mysterious. He thought that probably Isabelle was more mysterious than any other woman.

He put his arms around her again, and dropped his face across her shoulder. He patted and hugged, she giggled happily against him.

Grace was clamoring, chewing at his trouser leg.

"Ralphie. What kind of a day—"

"Oh, you know. I just fooled around. Took a walk."

Her clear gaze was enfolding him. "Took a walk? You mean—at noon?"

"No, a long walk, out in the woods and everything." He began to laugh uproariously. "Say, don't tell me you forgot? I didn't go to the bank to-day. It's Washington's Birthday.

Isabelle collapsed against him, hiding her pretty face. "Heavens and earth—Ralph, I did forget. You know, I thought of you all day—whenever I thought of you—as being at the bank. What a shame! We missed having a holiday together!"

"How's Mother?"

"She's getting along all right. I had a dreadful time persuading Aunt Alice Underwood to come. Honestly, honey, I'm just going to quit running to Lake Tocoma every Mother yelps. I'm sick tired of it. It messes up everything, and it certainly does do her any good either to listen to her like that."

Ralph said, "I've been [illegible] to tell you that for ages."

"Well, you were right. I think: My trip up there was necessary at all, and it kept from having a nice time together." She ducked her away from his. "Whoo, you've been drinking whisky."

He asked devilishly, "What? How about you [illegible] some?"

"Not straight."

"Well, why not? This holiday. Wednesday, February twenty-second, the birthday George Washington, the Father of His Country! I'll make any kind of drink you want."

Ralph Bee could not mix anything but Martinis or Manhattans without consulting a cocktail recipe chart, but he offered fancy delights with the confidence of a bartender at the Plaza. "How about Old - Fashioned, maybe? Sidecar? A—a Stinger?"

Isabelle's face was still [illegible] against his shoulder; her [illegible] seemed buried within him. "Anything any other thing. Anything the world except—I don't [illegible] any mulled wine."

"Mulled wine? Who gave you that idea?"

"I don't know, but I don't want any. Ralph. You know what?"

"What?"

"We ought to—oh, I don know—do more things of beaten track. You know might have taken a drive day. We could have gone just wandering along the [illegible] somewhere . . . maybe something new and different. Let's do it next time you a holiday, hmmm?"

"O.K. with me, chum," Ralph huskily, and pressed to his heart in pledge. "I'll mix some Manhattans."

She asked if ham would be all right for dinner. had stopped at the market picked up a couple of [illegible] Yes, he said, ham would swell. And she would like have him bring up some [illegible] made bread-and-butter [illegible] and a can of pineapple [illegible] the storeroom. Please [illegible] them right away, before started with the drinks.

As Isabelle uttered the quests and directions, [illegible] knew that she could never at the agitation of the [illegible] ever quite measure the [illegible] of his affection for the [illegible] to which he had returned.

Isabelle could never [illegible] the tautness, the frenzy [illegible] witnessed. Surely she [illegible] not believe it even if she [illegible] be told. Somehow she could only half believe [illegible] self.

"Is that the story [illegible] Bread-and-butter pickles [illegible] of pineapple? Right [illegible] down to the storeroom [illegible] on, Grace. Mice, mice [illegible]

He began to descend [illegible] basement staircase. [illegible] jolly slather of fur and [illegible] was scampering ahead [illegible] excited at the notion of [illegible] thetical mice.

Ralph Bee turned [illegible] the stairs and looked [illegible] through the open door [illegible] wife of his life as she [illegible] open the oven in the [illegible]

Her legs looked [illegible] ever, so neatly dressed [illegible] pale hose. But—Ralph [illegible] One of her stockings [illegible] peared to be just [illegible] crooked.

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NEXT WEEK'S NOVEL

AS the next in our series of summer holiday-reading novels we are pleased to announce "Last Act," by Margery Allingham, first part of which will appear in next week's issue.

Readers particularly enjoyed Margery Allingham's "The Patient at Peacock's Hall," which we published as a recent serial. This clever author is adept at intrigue and suspense, and we are confident that you will find this new mystery, with its remarkable surprise solution, equally gripping and exciting.

ALL characters in the [illegible] and short stories appear in The Australian Women's Weekly and have no reference to living persons.

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This is how it looked before we took to the walls and ceilings. I had gone to all the expense of new curtains and new covers for the lounge suite. But the beautiful new covers just couldn't hide the cracks in the ceiling and walls.

We've got a new room for £40

CANE-ITE WALLS £30! CANE-ITE CEILING £10

You can do it, too!

My husband put up the CANE-ITE walls in one weekend!

On Monday morning I continued painting the Cane-ite which John had put up over the weekend. Even with the door bell ringing, shopping to do and meals to get, we had a beautiful and brand-spanking new room by the Wednesday.

"Our new walls and ceiling actually cost less than the new linen covers for the suite and the curtains. We hired a carpenter just for one day to help John with the Cane-ite ceiling although John said afterwards he could have done it himself. I believe him—because in one weekend he covered our terrible old walls with smart new Cane-ite."

You insulate as well as decorate with Cane-ite. Keeps out Summer heat and Winter cold. Cane-ite is easy to handle because it comes in 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 feet lengths — each length available in 3 and 4 feet widths. You can paint Cane-ite in any finish. It's white-ant proofed.

You can have a choice of three finishes (1) Natural suede-like finish; (2) Ivory finish; (3) Primed Cane-ite which requires no base coat — actual final color of paint can go straight on.

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At small cost you can have a kitchen that looks like a magazine picture. All of these spacious cupboards can be made by any handy man from the new C.S.R. Timbrock. It's refined wood made stronger and flexible so it can be curved around corners. It can be sawn, planed or nailed. It can be left in its own honey color or given any finish. Lasts a lifetime. In 5,6,7,8,9 and 14 ft. lengths and 4 ft. 6 in. wide.

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Continuing . . . . Women Are Dumb

from page 3

work back," said Michael. "What is her name?"

"Her name," George said, "is like something you think about when you are feeling sentimental. Shannon—Shannon O'Neill."

"Well," said Michael, "it's a bit pretentious, but it will probably sound all right when you get used to it—where's the girl?"

George looked at him. "You'd better get your dark glasses—she's going to dazzle you."

Michael looked bored. "I am shortly about to explode," he said. "Bring her in."

George opened the door and looked outside. "Shannon," he said, "come in, little girl."

She came into the room slowly. George put his hand under her elbow and escorted her across to Michael's desk.

She was tall, and cool, and slim. She moved with a vital sort of grace. Her hair was the color of buttercups, and the lights flicked about in it. She was about twenty-three.

She smiled then, and Michael saw that George was right, and that she would definitely be the prize-winner.

Her teeth had a lovely, translucent quality, and they made Michael think that, in comparison, all other women's teeth that he had hitherto seen had looked like spare fangs for Dracula.

Michael said, "Please sit down, Miss O'Neill."

"I call her Shannon," said George.

"Of course," said Michael, "there are certain formalities in regard to this competition. George speaks as though it were over; but we will have to let you know——"

"Of course," she said. She had a good voice.

"You will have to go before the judges with the other finalists," said Michael.

"Oh, yes," she said. Her smile was radiant but she seemed to have difficulty in finding any words at all.

Dumb, thought Michael. Dumb, but certainly beautiful. A mental age of about six.

Then he said, "Well, Miss O'Neill, we are glad that you have come. You will be required to appear before the judges next Wednesday."

Miss O'Neill rose, and Michael walked with her to the door. George leapt rapidly to his feet and took her arm, as though she were likely to fall and break her lovely teeth at any moment.

"I'll come with you, Shannon," he said.

"In a moment," said Michael. "I want to see you, George."

George looked disappointed. "Just wait on that seat outside there, Shannon," he said, "and if any wolves come hovering around with a love glint in their eyes, scream, and I'll be through that door in a flash."

"Oh, yes, indeed," said Miss O'Neill, She treated him again to the lovely flash of her smile.

Michael closed the door softly and looked at George.

"George," he said, "you have done a good job this time. You and I do not always see eye to eye on the matter of beauty. She is beautiful, all right."

"Beautiful," said George, "is that all you can say about her? She is a poem, a——"

Michael grinned. "Also," he said, "She's as dumb as they make 'em."

"Dumb?" said George, and his voice squeaked on a high, querulous note.

"Most women are dumb," said Michael, "and their intelligence is usually in inverse ratio to their looks. Now you take Miss O'Neill——"

"Are you kidding?" said George. "I'd take Shannon if her verbal repertoire consisted only of 'Goo!' and 'Dadda.'"

"I doubt whether it is much more extensive," said Michael, and added: "You listen to this. With that smile and her looks Miss O'Neill seems certain to win the competition, all right, but when the reporters get hold of her for an interview it is not going to look so good when all she is able to say is 'Oh, yes,' and 'Of course.' You'd better start coaching her a bit, and tell her what to say."

George's face lit up. "I think I like dumb girls," he said. He walked outside. "Shannon," he said, "look, dear, here comes te·cher."

Miss O'Neill won the competition all right.

Michael, reading the interview with the winner in the paper, found that George had also done a good job, as one or two of Shannon's sentences were almost coherent, and one, indeed, contained a word of three syllables.

When her picture started appearing in the paper men of all ages found a new interest in life. They never got as far as the sports pages. They just gazed at Miss O'Neill's photo.

Purliteeth's sales skyrocketed.

"Gosh, isn't she beautiful?" said George, looking at one of her stills.

"Beauty," said Michael, "is only a good brand of face powder and a tube of lipstick."

"How I wish I were the lipstick," said George.

Michael said, "Men like you make girls vain."

George got up and walked over to the window. "It's a beautiful day," he said, "and it's going to be even better?"

"Why?" asked Michael.

George looked at his watch and sighed softly. "In a half-hour," he said, "I will be walking through the park with Shannon, looking at the flowers and listening to the birds singing."

Michael grinned. "How poetic," he said.

George said, "Then this afternoon we are taking photos of Shannon in a bathing costume—have you ever seen Shannon in a bathing costume? You would never think that the silk, or whatever the stuff is they are making bathing costumes with, could ever look like that." He closed his eyes dreamily.

"I have my own television screen," said George. "I shut my eyes and I see Sh·nnon." He got up and walked slowly to the door.

"Open them up before you get out into the street," said Michael, "or you may be seeing the undertaker."

Michael was working late the next night when George came in. He looked up and grinned sardonically. "How's the beautiful dreamer?" he said.

"You know," said George, "you wouldn't be a bad type of cove if you didn't have such a disgruntled sort of outlook on life."

Michael asked, "Are you still dreaming of Shannon in technicolor?"

"Uh, huh," said George. He sank into a chair and lit a cigarette. "What are you doing?" he asked.

"Drawing up Shannon's itinerary for the next week," said Michael.

"Ah," said George. He drew deeply on his cigarette. "Very interesting."

Michael went on writing.

George said, "Have you listened to the radio at all lately?"

"Quiet," said Michael.

George watched his cigarette smoke. "There's a new session on the air," he said. "A new singer."

"I'm busy," said Michael.

"There's a radio in the photography room," said George.

Michael laid down his pen and sighed. "All right," he said, "let's go and get it over."

They went along to the photography room and turned on the radio.

Michael walked around impatiently. George said as he tuned in, "Relax."

Michael turned and watched him. "I hope she's good enough to warrant the interruption," he said. "We need a new singer for our Snowgirl Cream's show."

George steadied the knob. "Listen," he said.

It was a soft, rhythmical song. The voice was sweet and lovely; it poured into the room like sunshine.

"Not bad," said Michael.

George smiled.

The girl sang another song. It was even better than the first. "Yes," said Michael. "Excellent. You'd better approach her——"

George held up his hand. "Don't talk so much," he said.

The voice on the radio was saying: "——and you have been listening to Mr. Amilcar Andrew and his swing band—the lovely lady with the gorgeous voice is Mr. Amilcar Andrew's new singer—Miss Shannon O'Neill——"

Michael spun round. "What!"

George grinned.

"Did you know about this?" said Michael. "She can't do this."

"Sez who?" said George. "She is."

"The fool," said Michael. "I told you she was dumb. She's under contract to us. What will Purliteeth say?"

"They will probably say," said George, "that in addition to all the other advantages gained by using their superlative toothpaste, it will also enable you to sing like a lark."

"Where does this Amilcar Andrew play?" said Michael. "We'll stop her right away."

"I have," said George, "a

To page 53

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waiting with the engine
ning over—and watch your
ood-pressure. The session
on for half an hour."
In the taxi Michael slumped
the corner.
"You know," said George.
For a dumb Dora, Shannon
has a very nice voice."
"You don't have to sing with
your brains," said Michael.
"She's dumb enough to break
her contract—I'll sue her."
They arrived as Shannon
was singing her final number.
She was standing in a spot-
light just in front of Mr. Amil-
car Andrew's orchestra. She
was wearing a simple little
black frock and the lights
shone deeply into her lovely
hair, which stood affectionately
around her face. Singing, she
looked lovlier than ever.
George sighed noisily.
It was a lovely, lilting song,
and Shannon sang it with an
assurance and aplomb that
surprised Michael. When she
had finished the crowd ap-
plauded wildly.
Michael plucked at George's
sleeve. "Coome on," he said.
"Where are we going?"
asked George.
"To see Shannon," said
Michael.
They stopped Shannon half
way to the dressing-room.
Michael's face was all
straightened out in a stiff
grin. "Well?" he said.
Miss O'Neill smiled. "Why,
Mr. O'Hara," she said, "how
sweet of you to come and hear
me."
"Hear you!" said Michael.
"You are so—so dumb—"
"Oh, dear," said Miss
O'Neill.
"Miss O'Neill," said Michael.
"I normally take a poor view
of your sex; but I am now

Continuing . . . . Women Are Dumb

from page 52

more firmly convinced than ever that women are the dumbest, stupidest . . ."

A loud snort stopped him. He was surprised for awhile, but then he found that it was not Miss O'Neill, but Mr. Amilcar Andrew, who had given the snort.

Mr. Amilcar Andrew looked more like a wrestler than a musician. "Please," he said, "is this the insult that I am hearing?"

"You keep out of this," said Michael, "I'll sue you too . . ."

"Who, me?" said Mr. Andrew querulously.

"I know the answer to that one," said George, "will I tell him?"

"Miss O'Neill," said Michael, "you report to my office at 9 in the morning."

"Listen," said Mr. Andrew, "if you please, you dip your head in the swan pond. Shannon is my singer."

"Oh, dear," said Miss O'Neill tragically. Her eyes became two pools of sadness.

"Gosh," s a i d George raptly, gazing into them.

"Don't get dizzy," said Michael rather nastily to George, "and she is under contract to me," he said to Mr. Andrew, "and you keep your flat nose out of this."

Mr. Amilcar A n d r e w grinned. "I do not like that," he said. "Be pleased to cop this!"

He had long arms, and he trailed an enormous, hirsute fist at the end of each arm. He brought one of these up now from the floor, and smacked Michael squarely in the eye with it. Michael turned a double somersault, and landed on his back.

"Oh, my goodness," said Miss O'Neill, "my goodness."

"Don't you worry, honey," said George, patting her arm.

Mr. Amilcar A n d r e w laughed heartily.

Michael sat up. He said: "You can't get away with that, Andrew." He got up with clenched fists.

Mr. Andrew said: "Whoosh!" He accompanied this noise with a great swing of his arm, which collected Michael in mid-air and deposited him on the floor again.

Mr. Andrew doubled up in laughter, holding his stomach. "Excuse me," he said. "It is a mirth pain."

"I'm so sorry," said Miss O'Neill.

Michael got up. "You'd need to be," he said. "Now listen——"

Mr. Andrew patted Miss O'Neill comfortingly on the shoulder. "Take very little, if any, notice of him, my dear," he said.

Michael began to turn a rich purple.

"Now Mike," said George. "Be reasonable. You can't expect a girl like Shannon to understand all the complications of a contract. You said yourself that if they're beautiful they're dumb — girls I mean — and you know how beautiful Shannon is."

Michael did. He looked at Miss O'Neill with withering contempt.

"Any brains that she has," he said, "you could get three times on the head of a pin and then have enough room left over to write the Chinese alphabet."

Mr. Amilcar Andrew grinned. "Dear me," he said, "now it is that this young man plays so extravagantly with words. Be pleased," he said, "to further cop this." But before he could properly motivate his pendulum-like arm, Miss O'Neill laid a restraining hand on him.

"Just a moment," she said. "So is your great Aunt Elvira," said Michael. "Now just listen——"

"Quiet," said Miss O'Neill.

Now "quiet" is a small, inoffensive word, but the way Miss O'Neill used it was like a stockwhip cracking.

George gasped. "Why, Shannon," he said.

Miss O'Neill smiled. She looked tall and slim and cool, and suddenly she also looked very assured. "Mr. O'Hara," she said. "There has been a lot of talk on your part about contracts. Do you happen to have a copy of mine?"

"I had it drawn up myself," said Michael. "George has it."

"Has he?" said Miss O'Neill. She smiled.

"George," said Michael.

George moved about on his feet a little. "Well, Mike," he said. "As a matter of fact—Shannon hasn't signed it yet. She prevaricated a bit, and said she'd have to get someone to read it to her and, like you said, she was so dumb I had a hard time trying to explain it to her, and——"

Miss O'Neill smiled sweetly. "In short, Mr. O'Hara," she said. "It is not signed."

"You m e a n ——" said Michael.

"He means," said Mr. Andrew, "that Miss Shannon can give you the horse-laugh with her lovely voice."

"However," s a i d Miss O'Neill. "I am still willing to work for Purliteeth—as well as sing for Mr. Andrew."

Mr. Andrew's sigh would have made recordings on a seismograph. "My life, she has been beautified," he said.

Michael said: "Your work for Purliteeth has finished. I wouldn't have you work for me as a gift."

"Are you cutting off the golden egg to spite your face?" said Mr. Andrew. "If so, I hope you make a mess of it—your face, I mean."

"But Purliteeth may not like you working for Mr. Andrew, Shannon," said George.

"I don't see why not," said Miss O'Neill.

Mr. Andrew grinned and his face rolled and writhed around like the big dipper at a fun park. "She has the sweetest voice," he said. "It is like the very young birds in the spring."

"It's all right," said Michael. "But torch singers come and go. It was the song that carried it. Anybody with any sort of voice could have sung that song and made a success of it."

Mr. Andrew grinned. "Me, too," he said. "I think that song will make a lot of money for the composer."

"Sure," said Michael. "Anyone could have sung it."

"Be pleased to allow me," said Mr. Andrew, "to introduce you to the composer—Miss O'Neill."

There was a quietness in the place.

After a while George said accusingly: "Michael, you have been leading me astray with a lot of screwy information about beauty and women and dumbness."

Michael did not say anything. He just stood there looking at Shannon. It was obvious that Mr. Amilcar Andrew had made a good job of his eye, and he was going to have a black eye of colorful and decorative proportions. After a while he said: "Well, Miss O'Neill, I think I owe you an apology——"

She smiled sweetly, if a little triumphantly.

Michael stood there twirling his hat around in his hands. Suddenly he looked up at her and grinned. "Miss O'Neill," he said, "would you care to have dinner with me? There are some things that I would like to talk about with you."

She looked at him very steadily, very levelly.

George grinned. "This," he thought, "is going to be good. She is going to give him the good old verbal one-two."

Then suddenly she smiled again, and the dimness seemed to go out of the corners of her mouth. "Why, yes, Mr. O'Hara," she said, "I would."

He took her by the arm.

George and Mr. Andrew watched them walk away.

After a while George said: "Well—fancy falling for that big goof—it's just like he said: 'Women are dumb'!"

Mr. Andrew nodded sagely, but sadly.

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